



HIGHWAYS
AND BYWAYS
IN
LITERATURE

HUGH FARRIE



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BY

HUGH FARRIE

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"ACTE," "IMPERIA, AND OTHER PROLUSIONS IN VERSE"
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Section I

Men, Women, and Love

“These olde aproved stories
Of holiness, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges.”

CHAUCER, *Legend of Good Women*, 21.

LOVE AMONG THE GREEKS

“THERE is no trace in literature of what we now understand by the word ‘love’ earlier than the end of the fourth century B.C.” So wrote the late Mr E. F. M. Benecke in the posthumous “Fragment printed for the Use of Scholars,” entitled *Antimachus of Colophon and the Position of Women in Greek Poetry*. The object of the work is to prove the proposition contained in the sentence quoted, and to suggest that love in its modern sense was introduced into literature by Antimachus. What Antimachus did or did not do is hard to say, for practically all that remains of him is half a dozen lines from an elegy ; some sixty scattered lines from his epic, the *Thebais* ; and a charming little epigram in the Greek Anthology. Two other epigrams speak of him as next to Homer in poetic rank, and several authors, among them Cicero, Plutarch, and Quintilian, allude to him. Mr Benecke, however, like other English scholars, was not deterred by the scantiness of his materials from undertaking to spin a very big theory. One is so staggered by the suggestion that love enters literature for the first time in the fourth century B.C. that one receives almost without shock the assertion that “the

first man who had the courage to say that a woman is worth loving was Antimachus of Colophon."

Let us not quibble about the meaning of the word love. Let us say that the love of man and woman is a mixture of religion and appetite—appetite vitalising religion, religion purifying and justifying appetite. And the proportions of the ingredients differ in different individuals. But what I am about to propound, and if possible to establish, is that when Hector wooing Andromache may have said to her, "I love you," he meant just what any noble-hearted gentleman of to-day would mean if he uttered the words to the woman whom he desired as his wife. We are able to perceive the follies of the learned persons known as the "schoolmen" of the Middle Ages; it sometimes seems as though the learning of our times were creating an equally fatuous class of modern schoolmen. The initial mistake of these persons when they apply themselves to literary criticism is that, like Mr Benecke, they attempt to construct human nature out of literature instead of interpreting literature by human nature. *A priori* it is absurd to suppose that love as we know it first entered into the relations of the sexes at a certain point of the fourth century, and was then first reflected in literature. Any person who is an observer of the ways and manners of animals and birds must be aware that love, as we understand it, is exhibited in the brute creation, and this sentiment, with differences of degree but not of kind, has been experienced, we may be quite sure, for a far longer period than is covered by the

literature of the world. If Mr Benecke intended merely to demonstrate that the expression and definition of love were absent from literature down to a certain point, while human nature felt it, his labours were wasted on a somewhat unprofitable inquiry. But assuming this to be his aim, I will endeavour to test his conclusions. His assertion that prior to the fourth century "there is no trace in literature of what we now understand by the word love" is a general one. But Mr Benecke can hardly have known enough of the whole of the world's literature before that period to pronounce with confidence. For example, I would respectfully suggest that the story of Jacob and Rachael is older than the fourth century, and that the man who served twice seven years of slavery for his heart's desire understood love to be something more than lust or a blind instinct towards paternity. There is a passage, said by some to be the sweetest prose in our language, which begins, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm," the original of which probably was written before the fourth century : I suggest that the writer knew something of love "as we understand it." The legend of Lucrece and Tarquin, in traditional if not in literary form, probably is older than the fourth century : I suggest that Lucrece was acquainted with love as we understand it.

It is useless to multiply instances ; let us come to Mr Benecke on his own ground. He declares, inferentially, that love as between man and woman was unknown to the Greeks before the fourth century, and

he asserts positively that there is no trace of such love in Greek literature before that date. Both propositions I dispute. The first is false to human nature, and the second is contradicted by a rational interpretation of the facts.

Like most English scholars, Mr Benecke dwells at greatest length upon the Attic poets. He would have us to believe that Æschylus and Sophocles, and even Euripides, knew nothing of love, and would have scouted the idea that a woman can be worth loving. Now, as to the first, one would as soon look for what we may perhaps call lyric love in his tragedies as one would look for it in the prophecies of Isaiah. And as to him and the other two, it must be remembered that Greek opinion (Mr Benecke admits the fact with refreshing inconsistency) looked upon love as an emotion too sacred for public expression. But if Sophocles did not love his own Ismene and Antigone, if he did not mean our fullest love when he wrote the great passage which begins, "Eros, unconquerable in battle," I confess I do not know how a playwright feels and thinks. Of course a fatal objection to Mr Benecke's conclusions is that we have a very small number of the plays of the two first authors, and by no means all those of the third. To attempt to discover their views on love is as futile as it would be to arrive at those of Shakspeare if we only possessed *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Nor can you construct the life of a period from one or two authors. Mr Benecke argues many things from the verse of Anacreon and Theognis. But suppose a scholar two thousand

years hence should attempt to construct a theory of life in the nineteenth century from the first volume of *Poems and Ballads* and from the *Proverbial Philosophy* of Martin Tupper ! As might be expected, Homer gives Mr Benecke most trouble, and he endeavours to escape from his difficulties by resolutely regarding the *Iliad* as an Achilleis in which everything that will not fit the theory is an excrescence to be pared off. As to the *Odyssey*, he is simply flippant. Nausicaa is a "charming type of washerwoman." Penelope is merely the ideal "house-keeper," more concerned about the quantity of pork eaten by the suitors than about her husband's absence. (Did he really ever read the fourth book ?) The returned Odysseus prefers the society of his swineherd to that of his wife ; and much more, which may be amusing burlesque, but is execrable as criticism. One is amused to find that Mr Benecke gives up Hector and Andromache, consoling himself with the statement that "their relation is unparalleled in all Greek literature" ; and that it was not "really sympathetic to the Greeks," since "no attempt was ever made to imitate or develop it." Once more one can only cry with Matthew Arnold, "Oh, terrible learning !" Did not Mr Benecke know that the Hector and Andromache relation is unparalleled in all literature, and is it unsympathetic to us because even pill-makers' poets have reverence enough to let it alone ?

A ROMAN LOVER

Catullus, the Byron of Rome, is the first "modern" poet known to us—modern, that is to say, in the sense understood by those who rejoice in "chatter about Harriet." With him begins the personal school of poetry. He wears his heart upon his sleeve, or rather he draws it upon each of his pages. Many of his predecessors adopted a personal method, but the method was a deliberate choice and not an expression of temperament. The Alexandrians were poetical hirelings, who wrote eulogies and lampoons for pay, and the classic lyricists, one sometimes suspects, were artists first and lovers afterwards. Even the incandescent fragments of Sappho may owe their fervour to artistic craft rather than to personal passion. About Catullus there can be no doubt ; he was before all things a lover and a hater, and in his experiences and in the promptings of his nature he found inspiration for his muse. This is the species of poet that the modern man can understand. Our art has become purely personal, and our criticism demands a personal motive for art. Thus when Tennyson sketches a youth disappointed in his affections finding solace in the shield, and the sword, and the battle, we conclude that the poet must have been a war-loving "Jingo." We cannot imagine a purely artistic motive for the composition of the bellicose vapourings in *Maud* ; poems, pictures, symphonies, all to us are impressions, all are revelations of character and experience rather than the expressions of conscious art. Hence it is that

the stanzas of Sappho to a beloved woman leave us cold, while the adaptation of them by Catullus, addressed to Lesbia, strikes our ears with a note of personal reality. Of the life of Catullus little is known. Tradition says that he died at the age of thirty, but probably he lived a few years longer. The two main facts of his career are his love of Lesbia and his hatred of Cæsar and the Cæsarian party. The latter emotion he gratified by a lampoon of indescribable filthiness upon the Dictator, who, with characteristically tolerant scorn, punished the poet by inviting him to dinner. To Cæsar, Catullus with his whims and his petulance, his moans of love and his shrieks of hate, must have seemed a new type of man, for, up to his time, poets had been responsible artists rather than brilliant babies. That dinner party of Julius, then, was the first recognition of the licence of the poet, a licence that in our day has secured recognition as a privilege and even an essential element of the poetical temperament.

A well-known English scholar observes, "His passion was egotistical and brutal, and it proves what a new phenomenon it was that it has no appropriate language of its own ; when he wishes to reproach his mistress with the depth of the affection she has slighted, he can only say that he loved her, not as common men love women, but as a father loves his sons and sons-in-law. The explanation of this strange phrase may be found in another poem, where Catullus assures his mistress that the result of her faithlessness is that he loves her more than ever, but that he bears her less goodwill.

It was this element of goodwill that impressed him by its novelty ; he was familiar with the idea of man's desire for woman, and the resulting readiness to humour a woman's caprice ; but the feeling which makes a man wish well to his mistress for her own sake was something quite unheard of." Lesbia was married, and Catullus set the fashion of poetic adoration of married women, which reached its culmination in the age of chivalry. If, as most of the authorities believe, she was Clodia, sister of the famous tribune, she was ten years older than Catullus, and was as faithless to him as she was to her husband. The poet, in revenge, was unfaithful to her, and the wound that he bemoans so loudly seems to have been only a scratch. The passion of the poets of the personal method is undoubtedly sincere, but one may question its depth ; and out of a score of lovely lyrics by Catullus, the only one that betrays a lasting grief is the noble and simple poem on the death of his brother. Some critics, notably Mommsen and Munro, have placed him higher in the poetic scale than Horace, possibly because of his freedom from reserve, which ever delights disciples of the romantic school. Yet such reserve does not necessarily argue callousness. Horace flung his graceful trifles at the feet of his Pyrrhas, his Lydias, and his Chloes, yet perhaps it never occurred to him to sell his inmost emotions to the publishers, or to "make copy" of his love. One likes to believe that the urbane old bachelor, who knew so well the hearts of men, nourished in his own some secret joy or secret grief ;

and if he had a mistress, depend upon it, she was not a boon companion to be toasted amid the clatter of the wine-cups, but a sacred ideal to give strength and comfort in life, perhaps to afford some ray of hope and brightness when the purple shadow gathered about him. All this, however, is a matter of conjecture or a matter of taste. What universally must be admitted is that Catullus was one of the greatest of poets, the great pioneer of the romantic school. He was also, unlike many of his successors, a great artist. Despite the boast of Horace, it was Catullus who first adapted the Æolian song to Italian modes ; it was he who brought to life the "delicate metre" that is the delight of poets and scholars ; it was he who gave us the sparrow of Lesbia and a hundred other gems of sweetest song. Voltaire and Macaulay, seeking for the most beautiful lines of Latin poetry, chose the same passage from one of the Eclogues of Virgil ; but the beauty of it is apparent only to a scholarship that seems to be passing away ; readers of to-day might be disposed to select the three verses of Catullus ending with that melancholy note of Italian sweetness, "*Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*"

MEDIÆVAL LOVE : DANTE AND PETRARCH

"I still think of Dante," says Lord Macaulay in one of his letters, "that he is a superior poet to Milton, that he runs neck and neck with Homer, and that none but

Shakspeare has gone decidedly beyond him." It would be difficult to find a sentence of three clauses affording larger scope for controversy, for nothing depends more upon personal taste and inclination than relative estimates of poets. The *Vita Nuova* purports to be the intimate revelation of a great passion. At the age of nine years Dante cast his eyes upon a young girl, a year his junior, who from that moment filled all his waking hours and even haunted his dreams. He had but a glimpse of her as she passed him in the street, and for another nine years he never saw her again. When next he met her she either was married or was just about to be married to a Florentine nobleman. Dante went away, and, according to his own account, gave himself up to a sort of ecstatic analysis of his love and of the virtues of his mistress which fed it. There is no evidence that he ever exchanged words with her or that she made the slightest response to his passion; indeed, there is but small proof that she was aware of its existence. In a charming passage of affected naïveté Dante tells us that once in church he was gazing at his mistress across another lady—to put it in rude prose, he seems to have been staring hard at her—when his fixed glances were noticed, and the natural error arose that the "other lady" was the object of his admiration. The poet was delighted, and laid a feigned homage at the feet of this lady, with the idea of using her as a "screen"—the epithet is his own—to divert suspicion from his love of Beatrice. Presently the lady left Florence, and Dante was disconsolate; but Eros, in a

convenient vision, bade him straightway get him another screen, which he did with unsophisticated alacrity. How completely both parts in the little comedy were played is shown by his own words: "In a short time I had made her so completely my disguise that too many people talked thereof beyond the bounds of courtesy, whereat I was often grievously troubled." Punishment was swift to fall upon him, for Beatrice "cut" him in the street. "On account of that unfortunate rumour," he says, "which it seems had basely defamed me, that most gentle one, who was the mortal foe of all vices and queen of all the virtues, meeting me in a certain place, withheld from me that sweetest salutation of hers, wherein subsisted all my bliss." Whether she refrained from bowing because she was jealous or because she did not choose to acknowledge acquaintanceship with the hero of a scandal, ever must remain a mystery.

Those who argue the historical accuracy of the *Vita Nuova* exhibit a strange inability to distinguish between the impulses of art and the impulses of passion. To suppose that when he wrote it Dante was racked by the pangs of love and grief is as idle as to imagine that while with exquisite care Tennyson was contriving the stanzas of *In Memoriam* he refused his food out of sorrow for Hallam. All the evidence, external and internal, proves the *Vita Nuova* to be a pretty artistic experiment. To begin with, intense passion is rarely articulate, and the passion which expresses itself in sonnets accompanied by an epexegetic commentary is incomprehensible. If

Beatrice was a real person, the book was written after her death, when Dante was between thirty and forty years of age. Probably she was some childish sweetheart, whom, after the fashion of imaginative boys, he adored far off and in silence. In after years the news of her death may have suggested to the poet this charming idyll of sublimated passion which seeks no possession and knows no hope. The love described is expressive of a type rather than of an individual ; it is the prettiest picture of the heroine-worship of mediæval chivalry. If we had only the Beatrice of the *Divine Comedy*, where Dante recurred to his earlier idea, but transformed it from a pretty passionnal fancy to a lofty spiritual conception, we might believe in her historical reality. But through the amatory agonies of the *Vita Nuova*, which are common to poets from Sappho to Swinburne, there peep out traces of Dante's peculiar sardonic humour. Surely when he wrote the chapter about the "screens" his tongue was in his cheek, and he was satirising some extravagant custom of loving *sans la nommer*, with its attendant misapprehensions and complications. And furthermore, in defiance of the charge of ribaldry, I confess to a conviction that there is a hidden vein of irony in the remarkable explanations of the sonnets. Finally, there is nothing in the known facts of Dante's life to warrant us in supposing that he was a man likely to cherish a long platonic passion. There are indeed several incidents that point to an opposite conclusion. If Beatrice Pontinari really was the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, Dante married shortly

after her death and had several children, after whose birth his wife left him and declined ever to return to him.

The relationship of Petrarch and Laura, and the identity of the lady who, by his own confession, woke his soul to passionate song, are among the most puzzling problems of literature. From his own day to the present time there have been persons who believed that Laura was only an imaginary ideal, a figment of the poet's fancy. His close friend the Bishop of Lombes hinted as much to him, and Petrarch indignantly asserted the reality of his lady-love. This shows that the poet's friends were ignorant of her identity ; neither he nor the lady herself satisfied their curiosity. That Laura was a real woman is placed beyond doubt by the manuscript note relating to her death which Petrarch wrote in his copy of Virgil. But it does not follow that the matter of the sonnets is in any sense autobiographical. Petrarch, as he tells us, no doubt saw Laura for the first time in a church at Avignon, at six o'clock in the morning of the 6th of April 1327, when the poet was twenty-three years old. And there is not the slightest ground for disbelieving his statement that this lady, whoever she was, died of the plague at the same hour, on the same day of the same month, twenty-one years afterwards. But I am not convinced that the poems represent the actual experience of Laura and himself. Love, especially the love of poets, is apt to create ideal objects for itself, and it is quite possible that Laura, so to speak, sat for

her portrait to Petrarch without knowing it, and that the picture he painted had little resemblance to the original. The sonnets give us no assurance that the poet ever spoke or wrote to the real Laura. He was "smitten" at first sight with her charms, and proceeded to build up an immortal edifice of romantic fancy. The verses written after her death ring with a truer note than those addressed to her in life ; and this is what we might expect : the long-cherished poetic dream became, when Laura passed away, a passion.

This theory is not without probability in the cases of Dante's Beatrice and Shakspeare's dark lady ; but there are circumstances in the case of Laura which make it almost convincing. With all deference to Dr Garnett, a high authority who thinks otherwise, I hold it to be tolerably well established that the lady was Laura, wife of Hugo de Sade, and the mother of a very large family. She was about the same age as Petrarch, and, therefore, would be in the pride of her youthful beauty when he first saw her. She was a lady of high degree, and, so far as we know, of unblemished fame. But Petrarch's passion, unlike that of Dante, was by no means platonic. His verses represent him as besieging her with entreaties and reproaches which she with an ever austere charm evades. It is only after her death that Petrarch begins to rejoice in the severe constancy which kept his passion pure, if not in intent at least in act. Laura de Sade, when she died, had grown-up children as well as a husband, and it is incredible that they, even in an age so lax, should have

looked on quietly while Petrarch was attempting the seduction of mother and wife, and proclaiming to all the world in deathless verse the intensity of his love. I prefer to believe that she and her family, like Petrarch's own intimate friends, were ignorant of the identity of the poet's lady-love, supposing that they ever gave a thought to the subject. Probably there was as little resemblance between Laura de Sade and the Laura of Petrarch's fancy as there was between the real Dulcinea and the maiden of Don Quixote's dreams. One other point must be mentioned. Petrarch was in holy orders, and could not marry, but he became the father of a natural daughter and son during the very time he was thrilling Italy with his lyric rhapsodies of devotion to Laura. Fidelity, it should seem, was no element of his passion.

PLATONIC LOVE : MICHELANGELO

The noblest passion which Platonism produced was that of Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna ; if, as we fairly may, we put aside the love of Dante and Beatrice as a literary exercise rather than a personal emotion. But the love of Michelangelo was intensely real, and was tenderly returned by the noble lady who had called it forth. It was meet that Platonic love should be glorified by one of the greatest men and one of the sweetest women who ever lived. Yet, let it be remembered that when Michelangelo first saw Vittoria Colonna he was fifty-one years old ; wealth and high

station were his, and the vast renown which he had won had satisfied his ambition almost to satiety. And Vittoria was a widow of thirty-six bitterly mourning the death of her husband on the field of Pavia. Never again for twelve years did Michelangelo behold her, and during that long period he nursed a silent love, sweet and strange to the artist, lonely in his greatness, who had ever boasted that Art was his only mistress, and his works his only children. Vittoria in piety and good deeds had found surcease of sorrow ; and then they met again. The heart of the man flamed out to the woman, and hers was melted. But she was nearly fifty, and he travelling on to sixty-five. Ten years they passed in the intimacy of a blameless love, so ethereal, so noble, so remote from sense, that when, rent with anguish, the man stood by her dead body, he dared not touch her cold brow with his lips lest he should sully its purity. To ninety years lived Michelangelo, and "his soul maintained its fire, like some deep pool which, in the blackness of night, still reflects the sunset glow"; and the dearest treasures which he left behind him were the letters of his lover. So may the consecrating touch of time sublimate and glorify passion. But if they had met years earlier, when she was twenty, and he but thirty-five? Would the ice walls of Platonism have withstood such a shock? It is idle to inquire. More to the purpose is the thought that the ideal of the Renaissance failed because it was too narrow to include the whole breadth of our humanity ; and it was a lower ideal than that which, refusing to

exhaust itself in fruitless struggles against the bonds of the flesh, calls in love to purify and to glorify them. "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord ; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

HEROES IN LOVE

Heroes of real life and heroes in fiction cannot be judged by quite the same standard. Among the former may be a butcher's boy who stops a runaway horse, a chimney-sweep who saves a drowning child at the cost of his life, a scavenger who plucks a comrade from a deadly sewer. All we demand from the real hero is the supreme unselfishness which will endanger and even yield up life for another's sake. The hero of fiction is bound by certain rigid traditions and conventions. On the stage an entirely natural actor would be entirely ineffectual. He must demean himself and gesticulate with a view to effect which would be ridiculous and intolerable in the street or the drawing-room ; he must soliloquise as no one out of Bedlam ever does. In exactly the same manner the hero of fiction must make up and pose. Who, for instance, could tolerate a bald-headed Ivanhoe, a Colonel Newcome with a squint, or a Robert Elsmere with a red nose ? The thing is as impossible as a Hamlet in a grey tweed suit, with a gold-headed cane and an eyeglass. Unlike the real article,

the hero of fiction must be a gentleman. This, perhaps, is the reason why we look with suspicion upon the Homeric warriors. Only at the very end, when he receives the suppliant Priam, do we discover that, at heart, Achilles is a fine, courteous gentleman. There is always some touch of chivalry about Hector, yet we could wish that we had learned before the day of his funeral with what sweet nobility he had behaved to Helen through twenty long years. As to Odysseus, nobody could believe him on his oath in a court of justice, and a hero must be truthful ; yet one's heart goes out a little to the many-toiled wanderer when he demeans himself so royally in the court of Phæacia, and especially to Nausicaa. The hero of fiction is artificial, but the art must be concealed. In the case of Æneas the art is obtrusive ; we can almost imagine him in a long, curly wig sitting on the throne of the Grand Monarque. And then his treatment of the unhappy Dido was so scandalous that we must rule him out. The man who would perpetrate, with aggravated circumstances, a breach of promise to a too-confiding queen is unworthy of the name of a hero of fiction. Most heroes are princes and warriors ; but, with the shocking example of Æneas before us, we must confess that even pious princes and warriors are not necessarily heroes. Fiction, however, does not seek for its heroes exclusively in the purple. There is an epic narrating the life and opinions of one Piers the ploughman, and no one's sensibilities are offended ; but what would be said of the writer who should celebrate in divine verse the qualities of Jones

the plumber ? Every right-thinking person must feel, without perhaps knowing why, that a plumber cannot under any circumstances be a hero of fiction. Millers in literature are generally comic men and victims, but one can imagine, without serious shock, an heroic miller, while a hatter is clearly impossible. At least one tailor, Alton Locke, is a hero of fiction, but he was a poet also ; George Meredith's great Mel was indeed a tailor, but he was, before everything, a lady-killer, and all lady-killers are heroes.

The important truth just declared leads us to another train of thought. The hero of fiction must be the ideal lover. Now, the ideal lover of fiction is Prince Pretty-pet, or Ouida's Dolly. He must possess two essential qualities—one positive and the other negative : he must have a nice moustache, with or without waxed ends according to taste, and he must have nothing to do with trade. The latter qualification is extremely important ; Pleasant Riderhood had no hesitation in rejecting Mr Venus because he was an "articulator of bones." So far, the plain, everyday man may survey the situation with complacency ; but it becomes alarming when the suggestion is made that real women share the preferences of the women of poets and novelists. Is it, then, a fact that real-life Oberons always carry off the prize, and that the Quinces and the Bottoms must remain unloved because they are unlovely, and because they earn their daily bread ? There is a common opinion that women are most susceptible to the bandbox type of man, but actual experience hardly supports it. Every ugly man

consoles himself with the story of Sheridan, and in truth there must be many women to whom love is deeper than the skin, deeper than the roots of a genealogical tree. Literature loses both poetry and truth in making, so far as it does, love the pastime of boys and girls, rather than the very life of men and women. Why should a pair of middle-aged lovers on the stage or in the pages of a novel always be made ridiculous, if not merely tiresome, while the tenderest sympathy is invited for the amorous prattle of a couple of children? To some it must seem that the love which has survived the storms of passion, and anchored itself in the heart, is a better theme for the poet and the author than the transient whims and fierce explosions of youth. Considered even æsthetically, the bandbox boy and the wax-doll girl are poor types of perfection. They limit both the idea and the duration of the beautiful. A commonplace fallacy of literature is the proverb that beauty soon fades; it would be truer and better to teach that beauty soon changes, for not seldom beauty grows in cheeks that have lost their gracious curve, in eyes that the hard light of life has dimmed, in lips that pout no more for kisses. At any rate, it is a bad thing to be taught that romance, which is the joy of love, vanishes at five-and-twenty, and that after then a man and woman, whom love has joined, must be contented, the one to make money and grow fat, the other to be dowdy and darn stockings.

SCHOPENHAUER AND WOMEN

When Schopenhauer visited Weimar he presented his mother with a copy of his work, *On the Quadruple Root of the Doctrine of Adequate Cause*. "The Fourfold Root!" exclaimed the lively Johanna; "Oh, I suppose it's a book for apothecaries." The philosopher replied haughtily, "It will be read, mother, when not even the lumber-room will contain a copy of your works." The woman had the last word: "The whole edition of yours will still be for sale," she said. Both were right; for the novels of Johanna Schopenhauer have become as though they had not been, and the *Quadruple Root* failed to set the world on fire. But towards the end of his life the theories of Schopenhauer, enlarged in the *World as Will and Idea*, and a hundred strange ideas expressed in his shorter essays, began to make his name known throughout Europe.

A cynical epigrammatist has observed that when a married man theorises about women he is merely describing his wife. Schopenhauer died a bachelor; so far as is known, he never had a passion. When in Italy he permitted to himself a good many sensual indulgences, but he never thought it worth while to form a close intimacy with any good woman. His opinion of the other sex was based almost entirely upon his remembrance of his mother. Johanna Schopenhauer was a shallow, vain, and flippant woman, a novel-writing female of the most odious type. Her husband was a fat Teuton, an excellent man of business

with a taste for philosophy ; about as suitable a spouse for the sprightly Johanna as a prize hog would be for a Persian kitten. The poor man, who was twenty years older than his wife, endured domestic martyrdom for precisely the same period, and then, finding life unendurable, flung himself out of a window and was killed. Arthur Schopenhauer's observant eyes had noticed the frictions of the household, and quite properly he attributed them to the selfish frivolity of his mother. Women, he concluded, were creatures "long of hair and short of brains," and for the rest of his life he regarded them as contemptible instruments of a man's pleasure. Actually he was a sybarite, but the end of his philosophy was rigid asceticism and abstinence, which must bring about the disappearance of the human race. It never occurred to him that if his father had married some tranquil housewife, skilled in the art of making suet puddings, he might have lived happily to a hundred ; and that if Johanna had fallen to the lot of some strong, tactful, passionate man she might have become a good wife as well as a brilliant woman. Shortly after his father's death Schopenhauer quarrelled with his mother, and did not even write to her for eleven years. But her image remained fixed in his mind as the type of her sex, and with years his contempt for women grew into hatred. On one occasion a group of women were chattering before his door, and the angry philosopher caught up a stick and attacked them. One, a seamstress, who was seriously injured, brought an action against him, and Schopenhauer was heavily fined and

ordered to pay her sixty thalers a year during her life. It is satisfactory to know that she survived for twenty years ; when she died the crusty old Teuton inscribed on her death certificate "Obiit anus, obiit onus." Now, the man who would raise his hand, or rather his walking-stick, against women would hardly spare them the bitterness of his pen. Like most of the men who have reviled them, Schopenhauer had the slightest acquaintanceship with women. As a youth he had lived under the same roof with his mother, and as a man he satisfied both his lust and his scorn with any light-o'-love that caught his eye, but he seems never to have had anything like an intimate friendship with any good woman. The fact that the men who have written the most bitter things about the other sex have nearly all been bachelors is significant. A scoffer might suggest that married men soon learn the desirability of reticence on such subjects ; that only a person free and unterrified by a female tongue can dare to tell the truth. That, however, is the deepest depth of cynical prejudice.

Schopenhauer, certain that he understood his mother, and that all women were like her, would prattle confidently about the most secret motives of the female heart. For instance, he declares that "women in their hearts think that men are intended to earn money so that they may spend it if possible during their husband's lifetime, but at any rate after his death." Again he asserts that "the fundamental fault in the character of women is that they have no sense of justice." He

parodies an ode of Anacreon which says that, as Nature has given horns to cattle for a weapon, so she has given beauty to women ; but for "beauty" Schopenhauer substitutes "faculty of dissimulation." He notes that "when two women first make each other's acquaintance they exhibit more constraint and dissimulation than two men placed in similar circumstances." He is distressed because ladies talk at concerts and theatres. Our "ideas of gallantry and absurd veneration" he calls "the highest product of Christian-Teutonic stupidity." The relation of the sexes will be unsatisfactory, he thinks, until polygamy is re-established ; then woman will find her right place in the harem. "The Mormon standpoint is right." As things are, "to marry is to halve one's rights and to double one's duties." The mere physical type of woman disgusts him. "It is only the man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual instinct," he writes, "that could give that stunted, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race the name of the fair sex." Schopenhauer's misogyny here becomes repulsive ; hitherto it has only been amusing, perhaps because of the shrewd though disproportioned half-truths that it contains. But the man who wrote these brutal lines never can have seen with the bodily eye the Aphrodite of Melos, or, with the eye of the spirit, Glaukopis Athene as she stood at the bedside of Odysseus saying, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." He had no sense of the holiness of beauty or of the beauty of holiness ; his imagination fluttered feebly in the miasma of the stews. But what

if women are insincere in their social greetings ; what if their instinctive loves and hates often make them unjust ; what if they do discuss millinery in the middle of a symphony ; what do these things and a thousand like them matter when most men, oppressed by the cares and sorrows of life, find in the mute touch of some woman's hand, or in the quiver of some woman's voice, a solace sweeter than all the philosophy of Germany or the East can afford ? What, when a man may sacrifice ambition and money for the love of a woman, and in long after years may look back with cold and unimpassioned judgment and declare that the loss was as nothing compared with the gain ? Our fusty German, perhaps, would call him a fool. Yes, but there are things that Schopenhauer never knew.

SWIFT AND STELLA

As a rule, the curiosity of mankind is directed most intensely to the problems which matter least. For instance, of all the twelve volumes of Mr Temple Scott's fine and scholarly edition of *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, begun twelve years ago, what will be read with most avidity by the general public is the little essay on "The Relations between Swift and Stella," by the Very Rev. J. H. Bernard, D.D., D.C.L., Dean of St Patrick's. A hundred and sixty-four years ago the body of Swift was laid beside that of Stella in St Patrick's Cathedral, and now their very dust, inseparably united, has mouldered away into the earth,

and what they were to one another in life, or what they were not, no man knows or ever can know ; yet the literary world is divided by the question into two factions—those who believe that Swift and Stella were married, and those who think that they were not. Dr Bernard contends that they were married, and he has unearthed a letter of Swift's old enemy, Dr Evans, Bishop of Meath, which proves that the story of the marriage with Stella was current in the lifetime of both of them. This is important, because it disposes of the theory that the marriage story was invented by Lord Orrery after the death of both Swift and Stella. If Swift did not marry Stella, most persons will say that he ought to have done so, for his letters to her sometimes suggest the last degree of intimacy. But here Dr Bernard intervenes with his delicate suggestion as to the real cause of the mystery of the relations of the two. And what the Very Reverend Dean is contented just to insinuate, that eccentric litterateur M. Louis Nicolardot states with brutal directness : “ Il est probable qu'il [Swift] fut impuissant toute sa vie ” ; but this assertion is rather weakened by the fact that Nicolardot contends that Spinoza, Bayle, Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Robespierre, Marat, Beranger, Stendhal, Merimée, Ste. Beuve, Calvin, Maurepas, Rousseau, Mirabeau, and Heine suffered from the same disability.

The Dean of St Patrick's says : “ The indecencies which disfigure his [Swift's] writings have justly been reproved by his critics ; but it is significant that while

Swift is often obscene he is never licentious. The most natural explanation of these morbid imaginings is that he was constitutionally unfitted for marriage at the time when, had he been like other men, he might have been expected to take Stella as the partner of his home." Delaney relates that about the time of the marriage he entered the library of Archbishop King as Swift rushed out with a countenance of distraction. He found the archbishop in tears, and upon asking the reason King said : " You have just met the most unhappy man on earth, but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question." The marriage, if it took place, was the result of Stella's jealousy, and it is significant that Swift, in the journal he wrote for Stella, is mute on the subject of his philanderings with Miss Vanhomrigh ; and with regard to Dean Bernard's theory it should be remembered that early in life Swift made a formal proposal of marriage to Miss Waring, the sister of a college friend, and after her refusal he treated her in the most unmanly and unchivalrous manner. But if such a being can ever love a woman at all, Swift loved Stella, and loved her to the end. After his death, and seventeen years after Stella's, when his executors were examining his papers, they came across a little parcel containing one of Stella's brown tresses, which Swift had endorsed, " Only a woman's hair." The stories of the marriage performed by the Bishop of Clogher told by Sheridan and Monck Berkeley, and of the condition of separate living exacted by Swift, are very circumstantial, and it is hard to conjecture why they should

have been invented. On the other hand, Stella, in the will executed when she was on her death-bed, described herself as "Esther Johnson, spinster"; and Dr Birkbeck Hill, who did not believe in the marriage, wrote : "It is not easy to believe that Swift, in the three prayers written by him for her in her last sickness, written evidently with deep feeling and a strong sense of religion, would have kept hidden, as it were, from his God that he and the poor sufferer were husband and wife. Nor would she for whom he prayed that God would 'grant to her such a true sincere repentance as is not to be repented of' have in her last will described herself as spinster."

Well, let us give it up. Neither Dean Bernard nor Dr Birkbeck Hill is convincing, for the problem is insoluble. We are more influenced by the circumstances that Dr Johnson and Sir Walter Scott believed in the marriage, and where they were convinced it hardly becomes us to doubt. But Scott had become possessed of the lock of Stella's hair before referred to, and that might easily influence the judgment of even so great a man. Vanessa was convinced that they were married, and the belief filled her with chagrin. If they really were married, it was at the earnest entreaty of Stella, who was determined that he should not marry another woman, and whose pride was wounded by the compromising nature of her position. Swift a few years earlier had been willing for her to marry Tisdale, and it is difficult to believe that Stella was ignorant of the cause of his indifference to wedlock. She was thirty-

five years old when the supposed marriage took place, and though she had not been acknowledged as his wife, she had been wont to preside as hostess at Swift's house. Probably Stella's knowledge of Swift's secret made her less sensitive in her relations with him than she otherwise would have been. Knowing that in fact she could not be compromised, she forgot that others might entertain grave suspicions on her account. And these suspicions may have led her to implore Swift to contract a secret marriage with her. It is impossible to feel any sympathy with the wretched man, who was, as he said in one of his letters, "far from being a healthy man," and over whom the shadow of impending insanity already darkly lowered. But Stella was the one vulnerable point in the armour of his selfishness, and when news of her last illness reached him, he wrote : "There is not a greater folly than to contract too great and intimate a friendship, which must always leave the survivor miserable." And there we must leave the most extraordinary love-story in the records of literature, trying to forget Sheridan's hateful assertion that she begged the Dean at last to give her the poor consolation of acknowledging her as his wife, now that she lay on her death-bed, and that Swift refused. All that is certain is that he did contract "a too great and intimate friendship," and that he was the most wretched of men during the seventeen years that he survived her.

HEINE AND HIS WIFE

Of the endless definitions of love, many of the best known are mere witty paradoxes, but some seem to raise the curtain before the author's heart. A modern physiologist, best known for his studies of abnormal manifestations of passion, prettily, and perhaps truthfully, declares that "to a woman love is life, to a man it is the joy of life." This dictum is better than the famous saying of Madame de Stael that "love is the history of the life of women, and an episode in that of men." The good lady was a keen observer, and feminine enough, if vanity be an exclusively feminine characteristic, but she knew more about men and politics than about women and love. Her indifference to, and contempt of, the tender passion are manifested by her epigram, to the effect that "love is the egoism of two persons." Less subtle, yet still truthfully significant, is the phrase of Balzac, that "love is the poetry of the senses." A combination of the last two definitions, modified by open cynicism, is the aphorism of Chamfort, "Love is only the exchange of two fancies and the touch of two skins." There is a note of regret in the declaration of Louis XII., that "love is the king of the young, but the tyrant of the old." One may recognise the philosopher Cicero, always posing a little, always exuding moral precepts, in the maxim, good enough of its kind, "To love is only to esteem the object of your affection without lust and without greed." Cicero was an adept in discovering

half-truths and in giving them striking expression, and this definition is an instructive case in point. There is a significance, at once larger and more restricted, in the statement of Plutarch, that love is that which "gives immortality to our mortal race : when our nature has been extinguished by death, kindling it again by new births" : a sentence which calls to mind Diderot's cynically pathetic description of woman as "man's first domicile." Another philosopher, Schopenhauer, whose experience of the sex may account for his views, curtly dismisses women, we have already seen, as beings "long of hair and short of brains." In these matters, however, philosophers are less trustworthy guides than poets. Few things more beautiful have been written than the words of the royal singer who hymned love strong as death, that many waters cannot quench ; and there is surely a confidence born of personal knowledge in the triumphant cry of the sacred writer, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." In each of the definitions heretofore quoted one may, or at any rate may think one can, trace some indications of the characters, lives, and ideals of the author. It is interesting to remark that this strain of personality is not to be found in the two greatest of all poets. Homer's ideal of woman and of love no man may tell, for every man may read into him his own ideal. The magic of Homer lies in the fact that he deals with the simple, eternal truths of human nature, which vary with neither age nor clime. Shakspeare, too, offers us no personal ideal ; his wealth is so profuse that within

his store each of us may find his treasure ; but which was Shakspeare's treasure none can discover. It may have been Beatrice, but it may have been Katharine ; not impossibly it was Lady Macbeth.

Another great poet, Heine, is almost as inscrutable. His women, in sweet and weird procession, sweep through his pages ; on each, in turn, he seems to pour his passion of love and of scorn, and at the end of his life and work one stands wondering whether every woman was his soul's mistress, or no woman at all. His partly autobiographical writings throw no light on the problem. For Veronica he has such a love as Dante felt for Beatrice in heaven ; with Red Sefchen he becomes the lover of a woman ; his cousin Molly bewitches him, and after her marriage he gives himself airs as a blighted being ; then follow the Gertrudes, the Katharines, and the Johannas of the *Reisebilder*, and many another besides ; even on his death-bed he whispered tender words to Camille Selden. It seems probable that Heine, in reality, never loved any woman but his wife, the grisette Mathilde. The women of his books are phantoms of his worship of beauty, perhaps of his fulness of sense ; they are not the offspring of his love. It is hard to understand how a man whose world of fancy was full of peerless forms with noble minds could find his ideal in, and lavish his devotion upon, Mathilde. She was very beautiful, but she was ignorant and even vulgar ; she never in her life read a line of his writings ; she was of violent temper, and, to observers, even her tenderness seemed

indifferent. But it did not so seem to Heine. Her beauty and her bird-like brightness enchanted him, and he worshipped her. For ten years she had been his mistress when he was challenged to a duel, and at once he made her his wife, that, if he were slain, she might inherit what was his. On his death-bed, as he lay racked with long anguish, his only trouble was the prospect of leaving her. She was the one being whom his cruel irony never struck. When he speaks of her he almost ceases to be Heine. A little before the end he wrote : "This is ruthless Death ; he comes upon his pale horse ; I hear the sounds of his hoofs. I hear him approach ; the dark rider comes to seek me, he draws me away, I must leave Mathilde. Oh ! my heart cannot think the thought. She was my wife and my child together, and, if I go to the realm of shades, she will be widow and orphan. I am leaving alone in the world the wife, the child who, trusting in me, rested faithfully and peaceful upon my heart. Angels of Heaven, you understand my tears and prayers ; when I am in the dark house, keep her whom I have loved ; be shield and buckler to her who is in your image. Guard her, watch over Mathilde, my poor child." Compare with the scoffing passion of his books the passion of these words, written not in the heyday of a honeymoon, but at the end of life, after many years of daily companionship, and then something of the mystery of Heine will fade away. If it should seem impossible to realise how a Heine could love a Mathilde, one with profit may remember that men have a perverse habit of loving, each in his own way.

ABOUT MARRIAGE

“A prudent man,” says Cervantes, “resolved to undertake a long journey, will, before he sets out, endeavour to find a safe, quiet, and agreeable fellow-traveller. Then why should not the same pains be taken by the man who is going to travel through the whole journey of life, especially in the choice of a companion for bed, board, and every other purpose for which the wife is subservient to the husband? A man’s own wedded wife is not like a commodity, which, being once bought, may be bartered, exchanged, or returned, but is an inseparable appendage that lasts for life. Marriage is a noose, into which, if the neck should happen to slip, it becomes inexplicable as the Gordian knot, and cannot be undone till cut asunder by the scythe of death.” These sentences pleasantly illustrate the mingled pathos and cynicism of the great novelist, and they are instructive because they contain an ideal of marriage expressed by a noble mind and a fine thinker. In several respects this ideal differs from the best ideals of the present day, and in one particular it is offensive to modern feelings. Cervantes beautifully likens the marriage state to the companionship of two travellers, but he hastens to declare that the wayfarers do not journey upon equal terms. One is “subservient” to the other. Now, Cervantes was essentially a Christian writer, and it is worthy of remark that the Christian influences of sixteen hundred years were insufficient to uproot such a prejudice from his

mind. A famous contemporary of his, Montaigne, the bent of whose mind was in effect pagan, expressed the same thought still more emphatically. "As concerning marriage," he says, "besides that it is a covenant, the entrance into which only is free, but the continuance in it forced and compulsory, having another dependence than that of our own free will, and a bargain commonly contracted to other ends, there almost always happen a thousand intricacies in it to unravel, enough to break the thread, and to divert the current of a lively affection, whereas friendship has no manner of business or traffic with aught but itself. Moreover, to say truth, the ordinary talent of women is not such as is sufficient to maintain the conference and communication required to the support of this sacred tie ; nor do they appear to be endued with constancy of mind to sustain the pinch of so hard and durable a knot. And doubtless if without this there could be such a free and voluntary familiarity contracted where not only the souls might have this entire fruition but the bodies also might share in the alliance, and a man be engaged throughout, the friendship would certainly be more full and perfect ; but it is without example that this sex has ever yet arrived at such perfection, and by the common consent of the ancient schools it is wholly rejected from it." From this passage we at once perceive that Montaigne's ideal of marriage was much higher than his ideal of woman. In our time, despite the spectacle of the "New Woman," dressed in knickerbockers, discussing sexual philosophy,

the theory of the inequality of the sexes is losing ground, and marriage is being regarded as a companionship of equal duties and equal privileges. Briefly, then, to trace the evolution of opinion upon this matter may be of some interest.

The "concept" of marriage held by modern men differs from that entertained by the ancients in two main points. With us it is a relationship based upon religious sanctions and coloured by sentiment. Originally it must have been a contract of a very different character. Montesquieu observes that "the natural obligation on a father to support his children has led to the establishment of marriage." Most of the authorities appear to support the idea that paternal obligation and solicitude on the part of the community for its own continuance are first causes sufficient to account for the evolution of marriage. Such, however, is not the case, since a system of periodical pairing, which may be assumed to have been the custom of the human species at the time of its emergence from the animal world, equally well would secure both these objects. Marriage would seem to be the outcome of the conception of property. Just as cattle were man's first standards of value, so were women his earliest personal possessions ; they were, in fact, the primal domestic animals, the earliest beasts of burden. Long before man had learned to yoke oxen or to saddle horses, women tilled the ground, as they do still in many civilised countries, Holland to wit, and bore burdens upon the march. The duty of man was to provide food by the chase, and to protect his property,

which was liable to be raided by foes. This theory affords a satisfactory solution of many otherwise perplexing difficulties, such as marriage by capture, the general polygamy of savage races, and, what is still more interesting, the almost universal belief that fidelity is obligatory upon women but not upon men. "The offence of adultery," says a distinguished Scotch and therefore Roman lawyer, "has arisen from the commercial nature of marriage. It is a malappropriation of another man's goods." But where the woman is regarded as a commercial asset, rather than as a companion and as the mother of children, the sentiment of sexual jealousy cannot be very acute, and this fact helps us to understand several curious phenomena. Even to this day, among some tribes, the proffer of the loan of a wife is a common expression of hospitality on the part of a host towards a guest. In this country there was a certain custom known as "Borough English," by which, among feudatories, the headship of the family was vested in the second rather than in the eldest son. This custom probably was the outcome of a right belonging to the feudal lord, a right freely exercised in Scotland and in France, and, we may suppose, in this country also. In Ireland it lingered on to within living memory, and the attempt to enforce it is supposed to have prompted the murder of a well-known peer. That a custom so abhorrent to our sense of decency should have persisted so long is due to the commercial origin of marriage. It was but a tacit recognition of the superior rights of a feudal lord to the property

within his domains. We may suppose that the very first accomplishment of man's intelligence was the subjection of woman, and for a prolonged period her value was measured by her capacity for toil. But the domestication of the ox, the horse, and the dog must have effected a change in her relationship with man. The duty of maternity would assume larger proportions and would tend to become the only one considered by communities, as distinguished from individuals, in the regulation of the marriage state.

Thenceforth, then, the condition of motherhood, regulated by the principles of personal property, was the object sought by all marriage laws and customs. The history of Athens, Sparta, and Rome abundantly illustrates this ideal of wedlock. The wife was simply the legal instrument for the continuance of the nation, and the sentiments of love and romance, where they existed at all, were lavished upon the mistress rather than upon the wife. Remembering, then, that all the regulations of marriage were designed to secure the fruitfulness of the union, we can perceive the meaning of certain customs reported by the historians of the ancients—among others by Herodotus and by Diodorus Siculus—that to us seem revoltingly immoral. And it should not be forgotten that even now in rural districts of Norway, and probably in other sparsely populated countries, a woman is not considered marriageable until she is a mother or about to become one; this, however, being conjoined with fidelity from first to last to one man. The purely utilitarian ideal of

marriage is the only one recognised by States, the maintenance of the population, the safety of property and its prudent distribution, being the only objects sought. In Athens, for instance, the law had so little regard for what we regard as morals and propriety that a man was permitted to marry his half-sister. She, however, must be his consanguine and not his uterine sister, because in the latter case the father or the wife might die without male issue, leaving her the heir, and thus the brother-husband would obtain two portions—a possibility, by the way, that English policy fosters rather than discourages. But while the national ideal of wedlock remains utilitarian, the individual ideal has undergone a remarkable change under the influence of the Christian Church and the spirit of chivalry. Neither of these influences has sufficed to demonstrate to man the equality of the sexes in the sense of the words understood by the “New Woman”; and where such agencies as these have failed it is not probable that the combined potency of female trousers and experimental novels will succeed. What they have done is to change entirely the sentiment of the civilised world concerning the state of matrimony. The Church, struggling through centuries to dominate every relationship of life, laid early claim to regulate marriage. The contest was long, for not until the Council of Trent was marriage formally recognised as a religious ceremony, and it was not necessarily one in this country till made so by an Act of George II. In Scotland, since the Reformation, it

has been only a civil contract. In its victory the Church was aided by the feeling of sacredness attached by the Romans to an engagement so closely affecting the welfare of the Republic ; though this feeling, of course, was far removed from the supernatural sanctions imposed by ecclesiastics. On the whole, it was a good thing that, through dark centuries of turmoil and ignorance, marriage should have been strengthened by the terrors of theology. These, having served their purpose, are being mitigated, and the ideal of a secular contract is once more gaining ground as an integral part of the question. For the influence of chivalry, with its romantic worship of woman, we must be grateful evermore, since it made possible nine-tenths of our best poetry and fiction.

DR JOHNSON AND TETTY

Johnson was in his twenty-sixth year when he married Elizabeth Porter, a widow of forty-six with a daughter about his own age and several grown-up sons. What the charm was that drew him to her his friends failed to perceive. Garrick has left a brutal description of her, in which he dismisses her as a lump of elderly, ugly affectation, and he is known to have been in the habit of mimicking her provincial airs of fine-ladyism, as he thought them, and Johnson's clumsy connubial endearments, which, to a coarse mind, may well have seemed comical. Johnson himself, who later in life became the honoured friend of more than one hand-

some woman, always saw in her and remembered in her a peerless beauty. Long after her death he described the loveliness of her fair hair to Mrs Thrale, naïvely confessing that she always wanted to dye it black, and that he never would permit her to do so. To her gifts of character he paid the most touching tribute, declaring that she was the wisest person he ever knew. Observers more generous than Garrick furnish us with evidence that she was a good-looking, well-preserved woman, full of common sense, self-willed, quick of temper, and fond of admiration. When the world asks why such a man should have married such a woman, one is tempted to quote a verse of Heine which enshrines a good deal of wisdom :—

“Die Welt ist dumm, die Welt ist blind,
Und dich wird sie immer verkennen ;
Sie weiss nicht, wie süss deine Kusse sind,
Und wie sie beseligend brennen.”

Yet we are not sure that the Heine explanation holds good in Johnson's case, for there is some ground for suspicion that, like a good many other distinguished literary men, he never had for his wife or for any other woman a sentiment warmer than sympathetic friendship. He indeed declared that Mrs Johnson was jealous of Molly Ashton, but we have only his word for it, and he told the story many years after her death. It is true that they had one serious quarrel, and she left him for a little time. The cause of the quarrel is absolutely unknown, and no clue is now likely to be

discovered. Mrs Johnson may have left her husband in a fit of jealousy, for he had fallen into the bad habit of staying out late at night. On the other hand, it is equally possible that she went off in disgust at her inability to grow jealous. However this may be, the quarrel was soon made up ; she remained till her death, in Johnson's eyes, the best of women, and his remembrance of her in his published prayers is one of the most touching passages in English literature. She died on the 28th March 1752, sixteen years after their marriage, when she was sixty-two, and he forty-two. His grief amounted to frenzy, and his servants, in terror, sent for his doctor. But his strong sense of religious duty subdued the wildness of his anguish, and during the two-and-thirty years that he survived his "Tetty" he nourished a gentle grief whose tenderness was scarcely blunted to the end. His last mention of her, in his *Prayers and Meditations*, occurs in 1778, in the twenty-sixth year of his widowhood and the sixty-ninth of his age. He wrote : "This year, the 28th of March passed away without memorial. Poor Tetty, whatever were our faults and failings, we loved each other. I did not forget thee yesterday. Could'st thou have lived !" Such words as these are almost sufficient to cast doubt upon Shelley's maxim that "Grief itself is mortal," for Johnson's last reference to his wife is more truly tender than his passionate petitions when his wound was fresh. It is true that his remembrance faded a little with time. In later years he sometimes forgets to commemorate the 28th of March, and once,

when Good Friday fell on that day, he abstained from thinking of her, that he might apply his mind to holier things. But she had been dead eighteen years when he wrote : “I have recalled her to my mind of late less frequently, but when I recollect the time in which we lived together, my grief for her departure is not abated, and I have less pleasure in any good that befalls me, because she does not partake it. On many occasions I think what she would have said or done. When I saw the sea at Brighthelmston I wished for her to have seen it with me. But with respect to her no rational wish is now left, but that we may meet at last where the mercy of God shall make us happy, and perhaps make us instrumental to the happiness of each other.” But the most pathetic proof of his affection is afforded by an entry in his diary, which shows that, although a Protestant, he could not refrain from praying for her : “I kept this day as the anniversary of my Tetty’s death with prayer and tears in the morning. In the evening I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful.”

“THE PORTUGUESE LETTERS”

One of the minor problems of literature concerns a tiny seventeenth-century volume known as the *Portuguese Letters* ; perhaps one ought to say, two of the minor problems, for the authorship of the letters and the identity of the person to whom they were addressed are both matters of doubt and discussion. In the year 1669 there appeared in Paris a little book containing

five love-letters, written by some unnamed woman to some unnamed man ; from the letters themselves, however, it seemed that the former was a nun in a Portuguese nunnery, and the latter a French officer serving in the expedition of Schomberg to help Don Alphonso. The story told by the letters is short : one day the nun perceived from her window a young horseman riding past ; she was seized with a sudden passion for him ; and he, looking up, saw her, and burned with the same fires. The dissolute manners of the age, and the lax rules of religious bodies in Portugal, permitted their intimacy ; he found easy entrance into the convent, and she received him into her cell. Scarce assuaged was the first ardour of her delirium when her lover, feigning some pretext, or recalled by his superiors, abandoned her and returned to France. The letters, perhaps the most famous love-letters in the world after those of Heloise, are like a cry of anguish uttered under the stress of most atrocious pangs. Their success was immediate and great, and in the same year was issued a second edition, containing seven new letters. These, however, were mere literary compositions, and the forger was proved on his own confession to be a lawyer named Subligny, one of the wits of the Hôtel Bouillon. From the day of their first appearance the authenticity of the original letters was doubted by some persons, who regarded them as an admirable *tour de force*. It was an age of letter-writing, and epistles, both intimate and artificial, passing from hand to hand, served the purposes of our novels and magazines and newspapers. But

upon one point the code of honour was very strict. “One writes letters of gallantry,” says Mademoiselle de Scuderi in her *Conversations Nouvelles*, “to be seen by everybody, but one writes love-letters only to hide them. They who receive a beautiful letter of friendship do themselves honour in showing it ; they who receive a beautiful love-letter do themselves shame in publishing it.” There were a few who could not believe that a man capable of inspiring the passion of the *Portuguese Letters* could be base enough to publish them. Others doubted their genuineness because there are a number of discrepancies in them ; but a keener criticism has shown that each of these discrepancies arises from the fact that the order in which the letters are printed is not the order in which they were written. Rousseau disbelieved in them for a reason which is interesting because characteristic of him. “Women,” he says, “cannot describe love, nor feel it even ; their works, like themselves, are cold and pretty, having as much *esprit* as you like, but no soul.” He makes exception in favour of Sappho and “one other,” and proceeds : “I would bet all the world that the *Portuguese Letters* were written by a man.”

The general opinion of the critics, however, was and is in favour of the genuineness of the letters, and twenty years after their first appearance the name of the person to whom they were addressed was published. In 1678 there appeared at Cologne an edition bearing beneath the title the words, “Written to the Chevalier de C., French officer in Portugal” ;

and twelve years later an editor at The Hague, issuing yet another edition, wrote that "the name of the person to whom the letters were written is M. le Chevalier de Chamilly." Since that time the world has been contented to believe that the Marquis de Chamilly, Marshal of France, was the fickle lover of the Portuguese nun. St Simon, while surprised that a man so ugly should have inspired such a passion, has no doubt as to Chamilly's connection with the letters. M. de Lacombe, in the *Biographie Universelle*, declares that Chamilly on his return to France gave the letters to Subigny to translate and to publish; and Ste Beuve, in his *Portraits de Femmes*, mentions Chamilly as the recipient of the epistles. But a clever critic of the present day, M. Maurice Paléologue, pretends that Marshal de Chamilly is the innocent victim of slanderous gossip. In the first place, Chamilly never bore the title of "Chevalier," and so cannot be the person meant by the editor of 1678. Then, on his return from Portugal he had other things than love-letters to think about. For fully six months he was absent from Paris, sharing in various campaigns. M. Paléologue's strongest point is that all we know of Chamilly tends to show that he was an honourable gentleman and a gallant soldier, incapable of the baseness of publishing the love-letters of a grief-stricken woman. Furthermore, says our critic, if Chamilly had desired to proclaim his amorous prowess he would not have deferred the revelation until he was fifty-four years old, married, a distinguished general and influential

courtier. I confess, however, that I am not convinced by M. Paléologue's special pleading ; for the material fact remains that Chamilly's contemporaries believed him to have been the nun's lover, and he never took any steps to refute the charge. One's judgment of Chamilly must depend upon one's ability to discover the identity of the author of the letters. The only evidence in existence is contained in a manuscript note on the cover of a copy of the first edition, which was discovered in 1810. This note runs : “The nun who wrote these letters was named Marianna Alcoforado, nun of Beja, between Estremadura and Andalusia.” On the faith of this note the nun has been associated with the noble family of Alcoforado which lived at Beja in the seventeenth century. Now, M. Luciano Cordeior has proved by existing registers that two daughters of Francisco Alcoforado, the head of the family, lived in a convent at Beja in the second half of the century, and the eldest, who was born in 1640, was named Marianna. She took the veil in 1660, and was twenty-seven years old when Chamilly was quartered at Beja with the French cavalry. It is a fact that Dom Pedro, on the petition of the inhabitants of the district, ordered Schomberg to withdraw these gay and gallant horsemen. M. Paléologue suggests that Alcoforado, concerned for his daughter's honour, took the initiative in the matter of the petition. Marianna now disappears from sight for forty years. In 1709 we find her, an old woman of sixty-nine, contesting an election to the position of abbess, but

another candidate was chosen. Once again she emerges from the mists of the past. On the 28th of July 1723, Marianna Alcoforado, aged fourscore years and three, lies dying in her convent at Beja, and on the evening of that day the clerk of the convent, recording her death, relates in his entry how she spoke up to her last hour, rendering thanks to God for all His mercy to her, and how she came to her end with every sign of salvation. "She was assiduous in all things," he adds; "she fulfilled her duties and was a bright example. No one ever had to complain of her, for she was very gentle with all. For thirty years she made rude penances and suffered sore afflictions with much resignation to the Divine will, desiring to have even more to bear."

It is a pretty dream from an age of horsehair wigs; pretty thus to hear the last beat of a feeble, scarred old heart that once throbbed with the tumultuous passions of the *Portuguese Letters*; but it is only a dream, for I am persuaded that Rousseau was right—however wrong his reasons may have been—and that the *Lettres Portugaises* are only a literary composition, in part, at any rate, the work of Subligny. Passion is rarely articulate, and women under the influence of intense emotion do not sit down and write long diagnoses of their symptoms. The world, deceived by the occasional touches of womanly pathos which are to be found in the letters, persuaded itself that through all of them run the sincere accents of love and despair. The young Frenchman has flattered the beauty of the

nun, and she exquisitely writes : “ It seemed to me that I owed to you the charms and the beauty which you made me perceive.” Again she says : “ I assure you you will do well to love no one else. Perhaps you may find more beauty (though of old you would call me fair enough), but you will never find so much love, and all the rest is nothing.” In a passion of proud remembrance she cries : “ I defy you to forget me altogether. Je me flatte de vous avoir mis en état de n’avoir plus sans moi que des joies imparfaites.” How to account for these passages, reading which one feels across one’s face the breath of a woman speaking, if Subligny forged the letters ? I believe that Chamilly at Beja had some love adventure with a nun, probably with Marianna Alcoforado, which led to his recall. On his return to Paris he must have mentioned his *bonne fortune* to Subligny, have babbled with a lover’s enthusiasm about the perfections of his friend, possibly have shown him some of her letters. This was enough for a maker of books such as Subligny, who forthwith manufactured an amatory correspondence, gracing it with tones of real passion that he had caught from the lips of Chamilly or from the lady’s letters. Encouraged by the success of this book, he attempted a sequel ; but now he lacked the stimulus of Chamilly’s ardent confidences, and the seven fresh epistles proved a stupid failure. This, I am convinced, is the secret of the *Portuguese Letters*. No Portuguese woman ever wrote them—in them is no trace of the work of a translator ; they are utterly

French from beginning to end. In after years some inkling must have got abroad of the source of Subligny's inspiration, and Chamilly, condemned to silence by his double indiscretion, had the annoyance to see his name upon the title-page of the book. But not until nearly one hundred years after her death was the name of Marianna Alcoforado coupled with the *Portuguese Letters*.

Section II

In the Byways

“Other byways he himself betook
Where never foot of living wight did tread.”

SPENSER.

YOUNG'S "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

Who wrote, "Procrastination is the thief of time"? Everyone knows the literary busybody that torments his acquaintances with such problems. Of real, digested, systematised knowledge he has none; but the watches of the night he spends in the study of dictionaries of words and quotations, of *Notes and Queries*, and of such like sources of information. When he lights upon some fact not generally known, or upon some word, obscure of derivation or unusual of pronunciation, he makes a note of it for future use; and, next day, meeting a friend, bustles up with the slyly eager inquiry, "I say, do you know such or such a thing?" receiving the inevitable confession of ignorance with a little shrill snigger of satisfaction. He is a tiresome creature, but sometimes he is useful. For example, there is a large class of books and authors about which everyone talks and which no one reads; such works are a fine field for the peculiar abilities of our picker up of unconsidered literary trifles, and occasionally he serves to bring home to one's conscience the guilt of pretending to know. The excellent copy-book heading already quoted is in everyone's mouth,

but very few of us, it is safe to assume, have read Young's *Night Thoughts*, in which the words occur. This fact is not a flaw in the taste of the general, for the *Night Thoughts* are hardly entertaining, and I doubt whether they would now be felt to be edifying. Yet men so utterly unlike as Wordsworth and the first Lord Lytton agreed in admiring Edward Young. Fancy the old bandbox with rouge upon his cheeks, after regretting that "Young has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties," asserting that, of all the poets, he is the one to be studied by a man "about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world ; his gloom does not then appal or deject ; the dark river of his solemn genius sweeps the thoughts onward to eternity !" Perhaps it is not surprising that a highly artificial threnody should have pleased Lord Lytton, but the approval of Dr Johnson certainly is remarkable. An observation made by the Doctor, however, creates the suspicion that his study of *Night Thoughts* was not very profound. "Neither his blank verse nor his rhyming lines," says Johnson, "have any resemblance to those of former writers ; he picks up no hemistichs, he copies no favourite expressions." Now, from the very first line of the poem, "Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep !" to the very last, "And midnight, universal midnight reigns," Young, in innumerable passages, paraphrases Shakspeare and feebly attempts to catch the great resonance of Milton's line. Many of his similes are an odd jumble of Pope's *Homer* and

his own piety ; throughout there are plain echoes of Horace and Virgil ; and his three finest lines :

“Insatiate archer ! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft flew thrice ; and thrice my peace was slain :
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had filled her horn,”

bear, to certain lines of Callimachus, a resemblance at least as strong as that which Mr Churton Collins has traced between numberless lines of Tennyson and supposed Greek and Latin originals.

Young's father was Dean of Sarum, and the poet himself was educated at Oxford in the first years of the eighteenth century. Like many sons of clergymen, he was not always a pattern of perfection. “In this part of his life,” says a quaint biographer, “our author is said not to have been that ornament to virtue and religion which he afterwards became.” Indeed, he was fifty years old when he took holy orders, married a rich widow, daughter of a peer, and became “an ornament to virtue and religion.” On leaving college he was a friend of the profligate Duke of Wharton, who paid his expenses in an unsuccessful effort to enter the House of Commons. If Swift may be believed, he became a paid hack of the Government, and besides this he wrote plays that were performed with considerable success, although all of them ended with a suicide. One of his pieces, “The Brothers,” was in rehearsal when he took orders, and he withdrew it in celebration of that event. A quarter of a century afterwards he produced it for the benefit of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He expected that it would

produce £1000, but it was a failure, and he generously paid the balance out of his own pocket. After Young had renounced the pomps of this world for the consolations of religion, a rich widow, and a snug living, he seems to have retained one or two of those little imperfections that mar our poor humanity. His biographer mournfully confesses that "flattery was his besetting sin." Nearly all his works are dedicated to some noble person or other. The third canto of the *Night Thoughts* is inscribed to the Duchess of Portland, and in the first few lines the moon is apostrophised as "Fair Portland of the skies." Here is the title-page of another canto: "Night the Ninth and Last: The Consolation: containing among other things, (I.) A Moral Survey of the Nocturnal Heavens. (II.) A Night Address to the Deity. Humbly inscribed to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State. *Fatis contraria fata rependens*: Virg." His flatteries had no immediate results, but he persevered; and at length, in his eightieth year, had the felicity of finding himself appointed clerk of the closet to the Dowager Princess of Wales. Then the wounds inflicted by the "insatiate archer," which provoked from his muse the ten thousand lines of *Night Thoughts*, must have been healed by time. Considerable mystery surrounds these three flights of the shaft: the words are supposed to refer to the deaths of his wife, his step-daughter, and her husband. But the third line quoted above distinctly asserts that the three losses occurred within three

months, whereas Mrs Temple, the daughter, died in 1736, Mr Temple in 1740, and Lady Young, his wife, in 1741. It is generally supposed that the chronology of the *Night Thoughts* must be taken as a poetic licence, and that by "Narcissa" is meant Mrs Temple, and by "Philander"—words, like men, lose their characters by keeping bad company; in Young's day "philander" was respectable—he intended to describe Mr Temple. There were pathetic circumstances about the death of his step-daughter, whom he deeply loved, which well may have suggested his poem. Mrs Temple expired in the south of France, and, as that of a heretic, her body was denied the rites of Christian burial. Young wrapped her in a cloak and at night secretly with his own hands buried her in the garden of the house where they were staying, an incident which is related in the passage beginning, "With pious sacrilege a grave I stole."

Dr Johnson says of *Night Thoughts* that "the excellence of this work is not exactness but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded: the power is in the whole." This is another judgment that makes one doubt whether the great man ever read the poem. As a whole the work is intolerably tedious and prosaic. But there are in it a few fine passages which might have saved it from utter oblivion. Poetry, however, must possess at least two rare qualities if it is to live. It must be a sincere and profitable criticism of life, and it must possess certain technical merits. Nothing is more absurdly impossible than the "singing-bird theory" of

poetry. As a matter of fact, the greatest poets always have exhibited the highest technical skill, and most of them appear to have acquired their power by industrious experiment. The dullest ear can appreciate the majesty of Milton's verse, but the aid of a learned inquirer, such as Mr Bridges, is needed to understand the complex system of prosody on which Milton relied for his effects and which he perfected by laborious trials. Young, apparently, neither knew nor cared anything about prosody. His blank verse, which apes the form of Milton's, has nothing of Milton's hidden art, and most of his lines are mere prose cut into lengths. This is not the manner of the poetry that endures. Nor is his matter of more permanent value. His *afflatus* is the poor, masquerading theology of the eighteenth century. Young always wears his Geneva gown, relieving his formal preachments with an occasional gallery tag drawn from his early theatrical experience. Like other theologians of his time, he declaims with lofty superiority when faced by a sceptic, but whimpers with tremulous dubiety when faced by himself. And through all his ecstasies of joy and woe there is a fatal want of sincerity. From his three-decker pulpit he cries :

“ There's not a day but, to the man of thought,
Betrays some secret that throws new reproach
On life, and makes him sick of seeing more.”

This from the man who for eighty years climbed up the back stairs of the great, and landed at last in the closet of the Dowager Princess of Wales ! Mankind

has grown in wisdom since Young's time. Hardly, from some late surviving Calvinistic pulpit, can one hear to-day such gloomy depreciation of God's bright gift of life. It makes one glow with optimism to think that in so short a time the ideals of ordinary men should have improved so greatly. No longer would they tolerate the absurd picture of a worldling "that would blush at being thought sincere"; they would resent a libel so gross on human nature and on its Creator; and they would receive with gratification rather than with concern the title "man of the world" with which Young overwhelms his unfortunate Lorenzo. A change still greater is shown in the attitude of men's minds to the problems of the future; for now the alternation of grovelling fears and arrogant assurance, that Young's good persons exhibit, excites nothing but contemptuous disgust. These are a few reasons why the philosophy of Edward Young has become as dead as his sovereign, Queen Anne. Do you ask why his poetry has perished also? Then read these two lines called forth by the memory of his dead wife:

"There, oh my Lucia, may I meet thee there,
Where not thy presence can improve my bliss."

The couplet may contain very excellent theology, but the would-be poet who could imagine immortal happiness without his beloved, deserves to be rolled down the slopes of Parnassus in the spiky tub of Regulus.

STURM'S "REFLECTIONS"

One of the books upon which our grandfathers and grandmothers were "brought up," a book the very name of which now is unknown to all save a few elderly persons, is Christopher Christian Sturm's *Reflections for every Day in the Year on the Works of God*. This strange work appeared in its first German form in the university town of Halle, where its author was a professor, in the year 1775. Now, Sturm, in one of his daily chapters, supports the old Biblical chronology by a most ingenious argument. Man, he contends, has a natural aptitude for arts and sciences, and "is stimulated by necessity and the desire of obtaining conveniences and pleasures." But all the arts and all the conveniences of life have been developed during the past three or four thousand years. "It is absurd then," cries Sturm, "to suppose that men during the space of many thousands of years should have remained in the thickest darkness and plunged in a lethargic stupor from which they suddenly awoke, and all at once invented different arts and procured for themselves all the comforts and pleasures of life." A similar criterion applied to Sturm's *Reflections* would place the composition and publication of the work somewhere about the time of the Flood; so far removed from the beliefs of the most rigidly pious persons now living seem the opinions of the excellent German theologian. And our difficulty is increased when we remember that the *Reflections* were received

with satisfaction by almost every Protestant community in the world. In Germany at least thirty editions were published ; Queen Christina of Prussia translated them into French ; between 1788 and 1860 no less than twenty English editions appeared ; translations were made also into Dutch, Danish, and Swedish. The *Reflections*, in fact, had a "vogue" very much longer and considerably wider than the most successful novels of modern times have obtained or are likely to obtain. Sturm was not an ignorant zealot ; on the contrary, he was a scholar and the offspring of scholars ; for that great namesake of his who introduced to Germany the study of physical science was his ancestor. Sturm himself, who was born in 1740 and who died in 1786, filled several important academic posts and was rector of a parish when he wrote his *Reflections*. His mind was like a scrap-book crammed with countless items of unordered and undigested information, which, however, he employed with systematic skill for a definite purpose. In the Middle Ages it was a common practice of good men to take popular stories, even licentious stories, and to treat them as allegories, so bringing them into relation with moral truth and religious doctrine. Sturm's object, apparently, was to employ the phenomena of nature as the early moralists had employed vulgar tradition, and by the adroit use of formulas of science and of theology, to exhibit them as manifestations of the perfect beneficence of Providence. Thus his philosophy tends to the comfortable conviction that man exists under the best of all possible conditions

established for the wisest of all possible ends ; and truly a worse belief might be entertained, at any rate so far as concerns those conditions which man is powerless to avoid or to modify. For example, to regard a London fog or an east wind as a phenomenon pleasantly interesting in itself and as promoting the best interests of the human race, must be pure good to the individual.

The English edition of the *Reflections* now under consideration was published in 1813 ; it is announced on the title-page as “a new and liberal translation,” and probably it owed its existence to Dr Adam Clarke, whose Bibliographical Dictionary was the first work of the kind in the English language. If Dr Clarke indeed was the translator, shrinking modesty was a sad failing of his. Other English editions of Sturm’s book were in the market, but none of them had presented it “in an array fit for the English reader.” In his preface the new translator continues : “That this has not hitherto been done will be doubted by none whose perceptive and ratio-cinative powers are not sunk far below the standard of mediocrity. It is not to be expected that I shall stoop to point out the numberless transgressions against correctness of language and grammatical accuracy which every page and, I had almost said, every period of the translations of Sturm hitherto sent into the world present with the most disgusting frequency of reiterated repetition.” It is to be hoped that persons of keen perceptive and ratiocinative powers enjoyed the freedom of the new and liberal translation from the most disgusting frequency of reiterated repetition of faults of

grammar and of style. "We slumber," says the translator, "over the page which is polluted by colloquial barbarisms and deformed by continual outrages against accuracy and elegance." The devout Sturm, indeed, has so much matter to convey that "a style the most beggarly might perhaps be endured." But even his thought will receive "additional strength and lustre from elegance and splendour of diction ; as a beautiful woman appears more lovely when arrayed with neatness and simplicity than when cloaked to the heels in very rags and tatters." From which painfully carnal simile it should appear that Dr Adam Clarke, if Dr Adam Clarke it were, would have liked to say, but dared not, that beauty unadorned's adorned the most. The translation, he is careful to tell us, is "liberal" ; indeed, it is so liberal that one finds it difficult to conjecture what of it is Sturm and what is Clarke. The following passage, however, we may believe to owe its subtlety of thought to the former and its elegance of diction to the latter : "The wonderful connection between my soul and my body, the continued pulsation of my heart, the constant secretion and circulation of various fluids in my body, all depending neither upon my will nor my power, contribute to assure me there is a great and powerful Being at whose command those functions proceed with order and regularity, or stop, and my present existence ceases." To the German author alone is due, let us believe, the credit of an expression of devout thankfulness for the presence of fertilising saltpetre in snow, and of an ingenious calculation of the number of risen

bodies that will be present at the general resurrection. Sturm takes an average of the yearly number of deaths in the town of Hamburg from the date of the Flood ; then by a bold speculation as to the date of the millennium he is able to continue his average to the end of time. All that remains to be done is to express a proportion between the number of inhabitants of Hamburg and the number of the inhabitants of the world, and Sturm is able to inform us that the total sum of human beings who will be present on the occasion referred to amounts to one hundred and ten thousand three hundred and seventy-five millions.

Realising, then, the supreme importance of the topics dealt with by the author of the *Reflections*, one is moved to sympathy with the pious translator when he exclaims : "I cannot conclude this preface without sincerely congratulating the public upon the increase of piety and the more general diffusion of knowledge in this country. Our children are leaving the worse than foolish tales of Tom Thumb, Goody Two-Shoes, Little Red Riding-Hood, Jack the Giant-Killer, and many more productions of like nature, all tending to vitiate their young minds, fill them with absurd notions, and encourage a love of the marvellous and a dislike to plain truth, for works savouring more of probability and tending to conduct them through the paths of virtue to the temple of fame." It is surprising that Dr Clarke should desire for the young, through the instrumentality of his translation, a progress to the temple of fame, a windy and giddy eminence to be shunned rather than sought by

devout feet. But perhaps the phrase is an elegant expression introduced by the writer to adorn his page, and one which must not be interpreted with carping precision. This, however, is a small matter. What fills one with dismay is the contrast of the rising generation in Dr Clarke's time with the rising generation of our own time. Oh, what a falling-off is here ! Then, the youthful mind, forsaking the vitiating frivolities of Tom Thumb and Jack the Giant-Killer, was turning with gratitude and admiration to the ennobling verities of Christopher Christian Sturm. Is the power of grace waning, do the temptations of the world weigh heavier upon the childish heart ? I know not ; but this is true, that there is no child living who has so much as heard the name of Sturm, while millions are minutely informed in the personal history of Goody Two-Shoes and Little Red Riding-Hood, to say nothing of Cinderella or Richard Whittington.

HERVEY'S "MEDITATIONS"

Four years after the birth of Samuel Johnson and two before that of Thomas Gray, there was born in 1714, at the rectory of Weston-Favell, Nottinghamshire, one James Hervey, who to most of us has become but the shadow of a name, associated with certain *Meditations among the Tombs*. The benefice of the elder Hervey was worth £160 a year, and he had five children ; nevertheless, he sent James to Lincoln College, Oxford, where John Wesley was his tutor.

At college James not only prepared himself for holy orders, but “made himself acquainted with Keil’s *Astronomy*, Derham’s *Physico and Astro Theology*, and the *Spectacle de la Nature*, whereby,” says his biographer, “he laid the foundation of that knowledge of the wonders of nature which he afterwards considerably increased and adapted successfully to the illustration of religious truths and the recommendation of moral duties.” What amount of scholarship in those days was required for ordination I do not know, but it is interesting to learn that at college Hervey attempted the study of Hebrew, and relinquished the pursuit owing to its difficulty. Though his learning was small, his heart was big ; he was all through his short life a man of earnest piety and simple goodness. The first thing he did after ordination was to abandon a college exhibition of £20 a year because “it was unjust to retain what another student might stand in need of.” While a curate in Devonshire on £40 a year his almsgiving was so reckless that he would have starved but for the kindly craft of his friends ; when pay-day came round they would borrow money from him, returning it as his needs became urgent. In 1746 he succeeded his father at Weston-Favell, and there he passed the last twelve years of his life, ministering to his flock and composing and publishing his *Meditations and Reflections*. Weak vessels of our time, unaccustomed to the severer disciplines of religion, may learn with dismay the daily routine of Hervey’s house. He called his family together for worship twice each

day, and after the servants had read the Psalms and the second lesson he would expound some passage for half an hour or three-quarters, and conclude with prayer. In the morning, when the family were met together, he used to ask the servants, "Well, where was our text last night?" and after they had repeated it "he made them give an account of what had been said upon it, and then would repeat and enforce his last night's discourse, concluding with prayer." The Rev. William Romaine, in a funeral sermon upon Hervey, declared that that most excellent of men, when called down to tea, used to bring his Bible with him, "and would either speak upon one verse, or upon several verses, as occasion offered. This was generally an improving season. The glory of God is very seldom promoted at the tea-table, but it was at Mr Hervey's. Drinking tea with him was like being at an ordinance; for it was sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

We pass from these exercises of devotion, which the worldly mind, irresponsive to the highest spiritual joys, may find somewhat monotonous, and proceed to consider one or two questions of mere mundane importance arising from the works of the Rev. James Hervey. After a careful and reverential study of the *Meditations and Reflections*, I am of opinion that the good rector was the father of all them that write for the newspapers for the reward of a penny a line—a more respectable parentage than some critics would allow. It does not follow that Hervey had a style to be scorned lightly by any clever schoolboy. His English has rhetorical

virtues that modern writers of far greater precision and more delicate taste sometimes might copy with advantage. Grammatically he is more correct than the majority of his contemporaries, and the qualities which to us seem defects have been merits in the eyes and the ears of whole generations of good persons. The development of taste in style is a difficult matter to judge. In one of his most luminous critical passages Matthew Arnold observes that the prose of Chapman is intolerable to our ears, that Milton's prose has its own grandeur but is obsolete and inconvenient, but that the prose of Dryden is the true English prose, a prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how. "The needful qualities for a fit prose," he says, "are regularity, uniformity, precision, balance." This definition covers a great part of the ground, but it does not explain everything. Why, for example, should persons of good taste be offended by writers who never see a "big fire," but always a "stupendous conflagration"? Now Hervey was one of the first of these writers, men who, imitating the sonorous voice of Milton and the stately mien of Dryden, achieved a kind of effective pomposity which in our time has degenerated into the windy slip-slop of the penny-a-liner. Of the moon Hervey writes: "Her orb, like a royal sceptre, sways the ocean and actuates the fluid realms. It swells the tides and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow, by which means the liquid element purges off its filth, and is preserved from being putrefied itself and from poisoning the world." Again, when Hervey

would say that dew rises after hot sunshine he remarks : "This I might call the grand alembic of Nature, which distils her most sovereign cordial, the refreshing dews. Incessant heat would rob us of their beneficial agency, and oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentle motions of Aurora's fan, would dissipate the rising vapours and not suffer them to form a coalition, but favoured by the stillness and condensed by the coolness of the night they unite in pearly drops, and create that finely tempered humidity which cheers the vegetable world as sleep exhilarates the animal."

This is not mere penny-a-lining, because the writer knows the values of his terms ; he does not, for example, write "stupendous" when he means "very big" ; but his style surely is the model upon which penny-a-lining is formed. He has no idea of the power of restraint, of the effect of verbal economy ; to pour forth a copious flood of syllables is his chief desire ; no simile is too absurd, no comparison too far-fetched, if only it lends itself to rhetorical expression. Thus he prays to be preserved "from stagnating on the sordid shores of flesh, and from settling upon the impure lees of sense." How finely this phrase, "the sordid shores of flesh," might be introduced into the description of a fat woman in a show ! Here is a description of a storm, while writing which Hervey probably had in mind a well-known passage of Virgil :—"The tempest summons all the forces of the air ; and pours itself with resistless fury from the angry north. The whole atmosphere is tossed

into tumultuous confusion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner and his straining vessel now scale the rolling mountain and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge ; now shoot with headlong impetuosity into the yawning gulf, and neither hull nor mast is seen." Hervey, like most writers of his class and time, knows his Virgil well, and relies on him for bits of description, and he freely employs his Seneca for his moral tags, but the poet suffers somewhat at his hands. There is, for example, a line in the first Eclogue, *Majoresque cadunt aliis de montibus umbræ*, pretty in itself, and still prettier by contrast with the lines that precede it. The Rev. James Hervey paraphrases it as follows :—"The shadows of objects just before they become blended in indistinguishable darkness are exceedingly lengthened" ! He has original theories concerning nature ; the procession of the seasons, he tells us, and the variations of weather "are kindly contrived with an evident condescension to the fickleness of our taste, because a perpetual repetition of the same objects would create satiety and disgust." Twilight, too, was devised because "a precipitate transition from the splendours of day to all the horrors of midnight would be inconvenient and frightful. Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the grand vicissitudes of the seasons, but also the common interchanges of light and darkness, with an apparent reference to our comfort." Which reminds me of a bluebottle fly of my acquaintance, who brought up his family in the belief that strawberry jam was graciously provided by

man with an apparent reference to the comfort of the *Musca vomitoria*. But even the bluebottle would have refused to follow Hervey in the belief that the agonies of harmless cattle dying of the plague "are the weapons of Divine displeasure, and manifest chastisements of an evil generation."

MR BADMAN

When the Rev. Dr Watson propounded his admirable theory of the evolutionary amelioration of religious ideas, he might have been reading *The History of the Life and Death of Mr Badman*, by John Bunyan, which contains a good exposition of the hidebound Calvinism that blighted the souls of Englishmen two hundred years ago. To-day a person of the most serious religious convictions could not read Mr Badman's experiences without feelings of disgust mingled with somewhat irreverent mirth; a fact tending to show that, in a comparatively brief time, harsh evangelical dogmas have felt the influence of charity and sweet reasonableness; for doctrines once held to be sound and comfortable are now seen to be horrible and irrational. The volume on which I am about to comment is contained in an edition of Bunyan's works, "printed for and published by J. Fowler, Market Place, Ormskirk," in the year 1806, and the imprint bears the name of J. Lang, printer, Water Street, Liverpool. At the beginning of the book is a controversial preface not worth reading, and then we come to the long dialogue between Mr Wiseman and Mr Attentive, in which the misdoings

of the defunct Badman are set out in detail. Taking an early morning walk, Wiseman overtakes Attentive, and after the usual greetings remarks upon his mournfulness of mien. Attentive explains that his dolour arises from "the badness of the times," adding, "And, sir, you, as all our neighbours know, are a very observing man, pray therefore what do you think of them?" Wiseman, however, has no very original observations to offer on this theme, and he in turn sighs sorrowfully, and, urged by the curiosity of his companion, explains that his sadness is due to the death of a neighbour. "The man," he continues, "was one that never was good, therefore such a one who is not dead only, but damned." One is not surprised to learn that "as he spake thus the water stood in his eyes." For the edification of Mr Attentive he proceeds to relate the history of the naughty Badman from the time of his infancy down to his final entry into the domains of Beelzebub; and let us endeavour to disentangle the main points of the narrative from the maze of theology in which that modest heir of salvation, Mr Wiseman, obscures them. The first indication given by the youthful Badman of predestined depravity was a habit of untruthfulness; "he would invent, tell and stand to the lies that he invented and told" with such an audacious face that everyone could see in the child "symptoms of an hard and desperate heart." When he could walk he began to pilfer and steal. "He took great pleasure in robbing of gardens and orchards, and as he grew up to steal pullen from the neighbourhood."

These evil courses naturally were a cause of much grief to young Badman's excellent and pious parents, and his father did not spare the rod of correction. But all was unavailing, for no blister was big enough to draw out of him his double dose of original sin. "He would stand gloating and hanging down his head in a sullen pouching manner, and when his father did demand his answer to such questions concerning his villainy he would grumble and mutter at him."

The appetite of Mr Attentive grows with what it feeds on. "Why," he asks, "what other sins was he addicted to, I mean while he was but a child?" and we learn with proper dismay that he was wont to sleep in church during the sermon. Like Mr Gladstone, he would follow one of three courses: First, "to sit down in some corner and then to fall fast asleep"; secondly, "to fix his adulterous eyes upon some beautiful object"; and, thirdly, "to be whispering, giggling, and playing till such time as sermon was done." Moved by the revelation of such prodigious wickedness, Mr Attentive cheerfully observes, "Doubtless he must be gone to hell." Another youthful peccadillo of Badman was a habit of "grievous swearing and cursing," a circumstance that enables Mr Wiseman to elaborate a technical distinction between the sin of cursing and the sin of swearing, and to relate various judgments that befell persons addicted to the practice, among others to Dorothy Mately, of Ashover, in the county of Derby, a washerwoman, who, when taxed with stealing things, used to wish, with a profane imprecation, that if she

were not innocent the earth might open and swallow her ; until on one occasion the earth was obliging enough to grant her petition, and swallowed her up, tub and all. To lying, stealing, and profanity Mr Badman added a wicked dislike of "good books" and a love of "romances and books full of ribaldry." Then "he became a frequenter of taverns and tippling houses, and would stay there till he was even as drunk as a beast." Such being the case, no one need wonder to be told that, in presence of temptation, he did not exhibit the miraculous self-control of the young Israelite in the house of Potiphar. "Blessed Joseph," cries the enthusiastic Mr Attentive, "I would thou hadst more fellows," and then he desires to know, of course for the purposes of pure edification, full particulars of Badman's carnal transgressions. Let us pass over the passages in which these two godly men mortify the flesh by discussions about wantons, and hasten to the crowning sin of Badman's life—his marriage with an excellent young woman who had a little money. Soon dropping the mask of reformation, Badman began to stay out late at night, and when the brethren called at his house to condole with his wife he seems to have greeted them with very bad language. Mrs Badman divided her time between the duties of maternity—she bore seven children—and unavailing laments that she was doomed to sojourn in Meshech and to dwell in the tents of Kedar. Attentive is disposed to pity Mrs Badman, but Wiseman convicts him of error. Her troubles are the result of her own obstinacy. Before

marriage she should have "engaged a godly minister or two to have talked to Mr Badman"; she should have "laid wait round about him to espy if he was not otherwise behind her back than he was before her face," and above all, she should have "acquainted the congregation with her intention to marry, and desired them to spend some time in prayer about it."

Mrs Badman, having given birth to seven children and to much repentance, died and, according to Mr Wiseman, whose statement we may receive without question, went to heaven. Mr Badman, who was wicked enough to be wiser, had a second matrimonial venture, and caught a Tartar. Then he made a very profitable composition with his creditors and broke his leg. At this point Mr Wiseman promises a narrative of several hours' duration, and Attentive, growing a little restless, exclaims, "Pray do it with as much brevity as you can." "Why!" cries the justly indignant Wiseman, "are you weary of my relating of things?" "No," answers the other with great diplomacy, "but it pleases me to hear a great deal in few words," and it must please us to say many things in small space. Badman used false weights and was proud: the latter sin manifesting itself in gay clothes and jewellery. With very deep concern does one read that, "It is whispered some good ministers have countenanced their people in their light and wanton apparel, yea, have pleaded for their gold and pearls and costly array." Oh, fie, good ministers! Badman fell ill, and then, "oh, how the thoughts of death and hellfire and eternal judgment did rack his

conscience ; nay, some of the weaker sort did not stick to say that God had begun a work of grace in his heart," a feeble departure from the great truth of predestination at which Mr Wiseman waxes mighty wroth, for to dream of anything but brimstone for Badman is to cast a reproach upon the all-wise decrees of Providence. Of course upon his recovery Badman relapsed into his ancient ways, and we find with relief that never again by any appeals to the grace of heaven did he shake the confidence of the elect in the most precious of their doctrines. Badman died peacefully of dropsy, consumption, gout, and other less respectable ailments, thereby convincing Mr Wiseman of the sinner's condemnation. When Mr Badman aforesaid was sick and howled for mercy, Mr Wiseman was assured he was a lost soul ; now that he dies as tranquilly as a child goes to sleep, Mr Wiseman is surer than ever that "he does not desire a sight and sense of his sins," and consequently, to use the emphatic words of Dr Johnson, is "damned and sent to hell." Mr Attentive heartily agrees that "if a lewd liver shall go out of the world quietly, it is a sign that he dies without repentance, and so a sign that he is damned." Such were the pretty principles of a creed that foully libelled the religion of Christ, a creed that lingers now only in the narrow skulls of a few professional theologians.

THE "EVANGELICAL RAMBLER"

A youth, some years ago, murdered his mother, and, after his trial, a number of persons wrote letters attribut-

ing the commission of the crime to the influence of bad literature. Artemus Ward, contrasting the respective social advantages of showmanship and authorship—contrast, by the way, is not inevitable in all cases—decided that "Literatooor is low." To dissent from the judgment of a philosopher so acute is possibly presumptuous; but if writers of penny romances, the mere journeymen of their art, are potent to persuade boys to murder their mothers, the masters of letters must exert an influence so enormous upon the destinies of men, that "literatooor" is not to be looked down on, even by the proprietor of a moral waxworks. This influence endures from generation to generation, and a skilful student of the phenomena of heredity might find an explanation of some of the characteristics of present-day English persons in the character of the literature which their fathers and mothers read. In the early years of the last century, for example, there was among the middle classes a keen appetite for religious tracts, the type of which is to be found in one of those works that everyone now talks of but very few read—the three prim volumes of the *Evangelical Rambler*. No doubt some of our ideas and ways of thought are explained by the attention bestowed by our forebears on this remarkable book, but the fact that seventy or eighty years ago it filled some such place as that now held by the *Strand Magazine* shows what an enormous gulf may divide two generations. The *Evangelical Rambler* was issued in periodical parts, and even at that remote period the publishers, who com-

bined the loftiest evangelical ideals with the strictest business principles, seem to have known how to whet the appetite of their readers ; for the very first number ends as follows :—“ ‘ Dear boy ! ’ said the afflicted widow, ‘ he says he will come down to be nursed by his mother. He is an affectionate son. I will wipe off the cold sweat of death and pray——’ (In the next Number will be given an account of George Lewellin).” George was apprenticed in London, and there his behaviour had not been everything one would expect of the son of a pious widow. The beginning of his decline and fall was simple. On one occasion he was persuaded to sit up till one o’clock in the morning listening to the amusing but worldly conversation of a young clerk in his office who was a “ semi-Quaker,” and consequently a mere formalist. It is pleasing to learn that as George passed down Fleet Street his conscience began to smite him. “ ‘ What would my dear mother feel,’ he soliloquised, ‘ if she knew where I am at this hour.’ But having resolved that he would never again be guilty of such an act of imprudence, he silenced his faithful monitor.” His landlady, who was waiting up for him, seems to have been silenced less easily.

The first step on the downward path was now taken ; a second soon followed. The “ semi-Quaker ” lent George a book. Immediately after he had taken tea he retired to his own room. He opened the volume, read the title-page, threw the book on the table, and exclaimed, “ No, I’ll not read it. I gave my word of honour to my dear mother that I would never read a

novel." Alas for good resolutions ! "As the book was elegantly bound, he took it up and examined the workmanship ; he then read the whole of the title-page, then the preface, and as he found nothing very objectionable he read on " for two hours. Not even the summons to supper could snatch him from his fatal infatuation till he had finished the final thirty pages. Then once more he threw the volume down, exclaiming, "Fascinating wretch ! thou hast beguiled me of mine honour !" At prayers that evening he was much distressed, but having retired to rest, reflected : "I don't know that I have received any moral injury from the book, and perhaps my mother did wrong to press me to give her such a pledge." It is terrible to think that to the worldly-minded this will seem almost the only sensible sentiment in all the three volumes of the *Evangelical Rambler*. The remaining stages in George's career must be told briefly. Those who know the depravity of the human heart will have foreseen that on the next Sabbath George went up the Thames. By the mercy of Heaven he was not drowned, and now the downward path was smooth indeed. He passed from the theatre to the billiard-room, and thence to the public-house, and to places still more evil. "To follow him," says our good author, "through the course of impiety which he ran for the space of two years, during which time he involved himself in debt, and contracted many diseases, would afford the reader no gratification." Next we find George lying on a bed of sickness in his mother's cottage, tended by the minister

and the doctor. The efforts of the former, aided by the apparent imminence of death, happily were crowned with success, and George was brought to a sincere conviction of sin and repentance. That in the end medical science saved George's life, and he became a respectable married man, is, perhaps, taking all the circumstances of the case into account, and regarding it from the standpoint of future generations, a reason for not entirely unalloyed gratification, even though, "as a Sunday school teacher, as a visitor of the sick, as an agent of the Tract Society, he was equalled by few and surpassed by none."

We fear that in later life Mr Lewellin was wont to attribute to his theological heresies experiences more properly due to other causes. Thus, after representing himself when a young man as a philosophical deist, he once remarked: "It is true that when the elements were in a perturbed state, when the tempest raged, when the lightning flashed, and when the thunder roared, I trembled." Upon no account would I charge the regenerated George with deliberate falsehood, yet I cannot but think that the state of his nerves during a thunderstorm was the result of some of his London experiences, rather than of his very lamentable unsoundness in Trinitarian doctrine. I am conscious of a like suspicion when he asserts: "I have seen a whole company of unbelievers disconcerted by a clap of thunder and retire, not to enjoy the pleasures of reflection, but, if I may judge from what I have felt when alone, to writhe beneath the agonies of anticipa-

tion." The influences which secured to Mr Lewellin composure during a thunderstorm, assuaged for Miss Roscoe the pangs of despised love. "This young lady united in her own person the fascinations of beauty with the nobler accomplishments of mind, and though she would occasionally intermingle with the gay and fashionable, and taste the cup of their pleasure, yet she was more fond of reading and retirement." We are told—and the vainest sceptic will not challenge the profound truth of the statement—that "months and years rolled on in regular succession," until Miss Roscoe experienced "a wound in her heart which was attended with an unusual depression of spirit." So serious were Miss Roscoe's symptoms that a fatal issue was expected, when a lady of experience prescribed a course of Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, and under the exhilarating monitions of Doddridge Miss Roscoe was cured. One evening, sitting with her parents, she displayed an unusual degree of vivacity, and Mr Roscoe said: "My dear Sophia, it gives us great pleasure to witness your pleasantry, and we hope that in a short time you will be able to partake of those enjoyments in which you have taken so much delight. We have resolved to celebrate your convalescence by giving a ball, and we hope you will lead off in style." This communication, which was intended to raise her spirits, had a contrary effect, and she replied: "I am conscious that you always keep my happiness in view, but I assure you that such a mode of celebrating my deliverance from the gloomy night of mental sadness

would ill accord with the sentiments and feelings of my mind ; the song of mirth I would exchange for the hymn of praise, and would prefer the retirement of devout meditation to the noisy bustle and fantastic exhibition of human vanity and folly." How beautiful in a daughter thus to rebuke the worldliness of a parent ! how wonderful the change wrought by Providence in the heart of Sophia through the instrumentality of the devout Doddridge ! Of her one is persuaded it never will be said, as it was of a Mrs Beaufoy, that "the prayer meeting in which her voice had often been heard leading the devotions of the humble Christian was now deserted for the conviviality of a select party." The *Evangelical Rambler*, of whose peculiar charm these few extracts give but a faint idea, ran to a hundred and eight numbers, and these now are found in the form of three volumes. The author, the Rev. John Morison, was a Dissenting minister, and he produced also eight volumes of commentaries on the Psalms, one of *Death-bed Scenes*, and another of lectures on *The Reciprocal Obligations of Life*.

"THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN"

A solid, businesslike volume, bound in crimson morocco, lying before me, bears upon its flyleaf the autograph "J. D. Coleridge," and the date 1860. It is the Lord Chief Justice's copy of a once famous work, entitled *The New Whole Duty of Man*. There was an *Old Whole Duty*, but as it was compiled in "the un-

happy times ” of the Great Rebellion its system of conduct and its precepts were found to be unsuitable to the guidance of good people under the changed conditions of life in the days of the restored Monarchy. So some excellent and able Churchman set himself to work to revise *The Whole Duty of Man*, and to bring it up to date. Who the writer was that attempted this large task is quite unknown. The authorship of the book has been attributed to a brace of archbishops, half a dozen bishops, to several learned doctors, and to one equally learned lady. The writer, whoever he was, produced a most ingenious and powerful polemic, which entered into the very bones of our fathers, and which, thanks to heredity, probably lurks somewhere in the constitution of most of us to-day. Lord Coleridge was a very young man when he wrote his name in his copy of *The Whole Duty*, and one may think without being fanciful that the unctuousness of his silvern eloquence, in part at least, was derived from a study of this and similar works. In our critical days, when no small portion of the whole duty of man appears to be the fair and fearless exercise of such reasoning powers as he possesses, an initial difficulty is felt which our anonymous author does not perceive. If the whole duty of mankind can be devised as a system and defined between the covers of a book, it must touch at every point the whole life of mankind. Yet the whole duty of Christians as propounded during the Commonwealth was found to be quite inadequate to the needs of Christians after the Restoration. In spite of the obvious

warning conveyed by this circumstance, our author sat down with cheerful confidence to compile a new "whole duty," "supplying the articles of the Christian Faith essentially necessary to salvation." He can hardly have foreseen that in the near future sincere and reverent believers might weigh his "whole duty" in the balance and find it wanting. This is what has occurred.

A keener criticism of life and its obligations enables us to perceive that there is no such thing as a whole duty of man to be kept as a standard of conduct like the standards of measurement in the Houses of Parliament. Curiously enough, the familiar phrase itself is a mistranslation, or at any rate a speculative translation. The words of the writer of Ecclesiastes as rendered in the Septuagint, which I presume accurately represents the original, contain no suggestion of duty either whole or partial. He says that to fear God and keep His commandments is the "whole man," a philosophical definition and not a moral injunction. The modern conception of "duty" is never suggested by the author of this most beautiful sacred book, and it must have been entirely beyond his comprehension; the word itself was inserted in the text by the compilers of the Authorised Version. In only four other texts of the Bible does our English word occur: in two of these it has the purely technical meaning of "marital duty"; in another it represents the obligation upon Gentile converts to contribute to the maintenance of poor Christians in Jerusalem; and in one only—namely, a passage of St Luke—is there a suggestion of duty as an

element of conduct generally. And there the allusion is rather depreciatory : “ We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do.” Here the word means “duties” as we speak of a servant’s duties, and the sentence is a not very happy paraphrase of the original ; “that which it was our business to do ” would perhaps have been better. The history of the term “duty ” is interesting and instructive as showing how, in the process of the ages, moral conceptions tend to grow both complex and abstract. In the origin the word means a debt, and hence anything which one is under obligation to do. Here, of course, it represents a simple human relationship. To the philosophers of the ancient world duty under particular conditions, such as the duty of a soldier, or the duty of a citizen, or even the duty of a father or a son, was quite intelligible ; they realised the moral necessity of fulfilling recognised obligations ; but in Greece and Rome they had no word to express the abstract conception of duty as we understand it. Christianity first taught the possibility and the nature of duty owed by man to God, and this to devout pagans must have been unthinkable. They had their ceremonial obligations to the Deity of a political and prudential character, but they never realised the possibility of a duty of man to his Maker such as is expounded in Christian revelation.

Even the author of *The Whole Duty* must have admitted that duty as between man and man must vary with time and circumstance, and therefore cannot be

defined as a whole. But he believed that the fundamental principle of duty is evolved out of the relations between man and God, that the recognition and observance of one's duty to the Deity include the fullest performance of one's duty to one's fellows. And inasmuch as he understood duty to be defined by the eternal and unchanging will of God, he was entitled to prescribe the limits of the "whole duty of man." But he did not perceive that the nature of duty from man to God must be affected by the nature of God's manifestations of Himself to the human mind. It is the privilege of Christians to know that the Almighty has granted to men an ever-growing knowledge and perception of His wisdom and goodness and power. The highest belief which their hearts can entertain is that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This knowledge grows in depth as well as in extent, and hence it is that the bounds of duty in its highest meaning are ever changing, ever enlarging. No doubt the author of *The Whole Duty* taught the best morality of his time when he wrote that faith in life everlasting should "breed in us an awe of the great God, a jealous God, a consuming fire, a God who will not be mocked"; that "this should teach us to tremble at His word, at the fierceness of His wrath, at the dreadfulness of His vengeance." To him there was nothing shocking in the argument that, because men punish persistent criminals with lifelong imprisonment, therefore God is justified in inflicting eternal torment on those who die in their sins. "It is only necessary

to suppose,” he says, “that those who are consigned to everlasting misery are such as by a continued course of sinning have so disabled all the powers of the soul that it is morally impossible for them, without the extraordinary grace of God, to cease from sinning ; and then if it be no injustice, as undoubtedly it is not, that every sinner should be a sufferer, there can be no injustice that every habitual eternal sinner should be an eternal sufferer. Suppose, again, that the outward acts of sin are temporary, yet the defilement and habit contracted by a repetition of these acts are, if we die in a state of impenitence, eternal. And as eternal ill habits are the source of eternal torments, it will follow that the impenitent have entailed upon themselves everlasting misery.” A fundamental sanction of duty such as this is unacceptable to the best Christian opinion of the present age, and with the disappearance of the sanction the Christian’s conception of duty to his God is changed and enlarged. It follows, then, that any attempt to prescribe the whole duty of mankind is vain and even harmful. Though there are few contingencies of life in which a man need doubt as to the direction of his own duty, he should be slow to judge by a rigid artificial code what others may believe to be their duty.

“THE FEMALE QUIXOTE”

Writing for the barbarians that be beyond the ocean to instruct them as to “Tendencies in Fiction,” Mr Andrew Lang observes that “the novel somehow, like Aaron’s

rod, has swallowed up all the other species of literature. When the public says 'literature,' the public means novels, and new novels. History, philosophy, theology, are not read as our fathers read them in works of theology, philosophy, and history. These branches of literature now exist merely as 'stock'—in the culinary sense—for novels." Such being the case, it is fortunate for posterity that fiction of all the forms of literature is the most perishable. One shudders to imagine what the burden of a next-century man would be, if the education of a gentleman required him to read, say, one-tenth of the new novels circulated by Mudie during the last twelve months. Mlle. Scudéry's light and vivacious story, *Clélie*, contained in ten octavo volumes each of eight hundred pages, would prove a study exhilarating if compared with a year's present-day fiction and its problems and its platitudes, its doubting theologians, its treasure-hunting rovers, its sex-debating women, its philosophical muddles, its historical perversions. In a wicked and witty novel of Crebillon the younger, the spirit of an erring man is imprisoned in a sofa until certain improbable contingencies occur ; one may imagine the soul of some great sinner a hundred years hence condemned to haunt the British Museum until he shall find an end-of-the-nineteenth-century English novel distinguished in manner and interesting in matter. But these be speculations more proper to the Psychical Research Society ; let us return to Lang and literature. "Only five or six novelists are immortal," says Mr Lang ; is it likely that our times will

make the number six or seven ? Of course we have no data upon which to answer the question, for contemporary approbation, however wide, does not make a book secure of immortality. The novels of Mr Brown, Mrs Jones, and Miss Robinson, which, each spring, are said to be momentous epoch-making works, very likely may be read in a single season by more eyes than ever beheld the masterpiece of Cervantes, and yet before the leaves have fallen they are forgotten and dead. Literary immortality does not mean what we understand by “popularity.” The “reading public” is mostly contented with contemporary efforts ; it prefers the *White Prophet* to *Don Quixote*, *When it was Dark* to *Tom Jones*, and *Dodo* to *Rob Roy*. Poll the novel-readers of the country, and the number who have read the great classics named probably will prove to be very small. Books become immortal when they are preserved from generation to generation in the affections of a little minority of highest taste and culture ; the mob talks about them, but does not read them.

Contemporary admiration even by the best men is not, however, any guarantee of enduring fame. The greatest critics have made shocking mistakes when they have gone in for the business of prophecy. Dr Johnson, for example, shortly before his death, asserted that Charlotte Lennox’s title to renown was infinitely superior to that of Hannah More or of Fanny Burney. And now, industrious patron of the circulating library, Mention the date and place of the birth of Charlotte Lennox ; Make a short synopsis of her best story ;

State your views of her relations, personal and literary, with her principal contemporaries. Such an examination paper would pluck a vast number of the competitors, and yet in her day Mrs Lennox enjoyed not only a popular vogue, but the warm admiration of men of letters. She was the daughter of Colonel Ramsey, Governor of New York, and was born in that town in the year 1720. When she was fifteen years old Ramsey sent her to England to an aunt, whom the child on her arrival found to be a hopeless maniac. The father died soon afterwards, leaving Charlotte destitute. How she lived for the next twelve years and when she married Mr Lennox we do not know ; but in 1747 her first known book, a volume of poems, appeared, and it is recorded that as the result of her marriage she had two persons to support with her pen instead of one. Her literary labours were manifold ; she published plays, poems, translations, and criticisms. Three volumes of hers were devoted to Shakspeare ; in them she endeavoured, with very imperfect knowledge, to trace the historical sources from which Shakspeare drew. The English version of Brumoy's *Greek Theatre* is from her pen, as are two romances, *Henrietta* and *Euphemia*, still occasionally referred to by critical writers.

But so far as Mrs Lennox is known at all, she is known as the author of *The Female Quixote*, which is by far the best of the many imitations of the great work of Cervantes, and for which Dr Johnson, who thought highly of it, wrote a sonorous dedication to the Earl of

Manchester. In 1752, when *The Female Quixote* was published, the libraries of well-to-do persons must have contained bad English translations of the interminable romances of Gomberville, Calprenède, and Scudéry, and these works must have moved the fancy of the maidens of that day as Ibsen and golf have affected those of our time. They envied the beauty of Alcidiana, they wondered at the valour of Oroondates, they shuddered at the fury of Roxana, they wept over the woes of Cleopatra—not the notorious lady of history—of Statira, of Parisatis, and a score more ridiculous and impossible heroines. Doubtless they became as charmingly impracticable, as fascinatingly perverse as modern emulators of the “Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith” or the “Woman who Did.” To lash such foibles was the purpose of *The Female Quixote*, in which the heroine, Arabella, an otherwise sane and pleasant girl, endeavours to live the life of a heroine of romance, believing that the topsy-turvy world of her favourite authors is the real world of English maidens. She imagines the gardener to be a prince in disguise for love of her ; she is amazed when a gentleman rebuked by her does not at once take to his bed and pine away ; she is offended when her patient and faithful suitor, desperately ill of a fever, does not get up quite recovered because she bids him to be well. Some of the scenes are drawn with a naughty wit ; as, for instance, that in which Arabella calls a lady’s waiting-maid into her closet and gravely desires her to relate, recording to immemorial custom, the adventures of her lady ; or that in which Arabella orders her suitor to

kill all her enemies and persecutors and to perform as many glorious actions in her service as those of Jubu, Cæsario, Artamenes, or Artaban. Miss Glanville, the sister of the gentleman, protests that in that case her brother inevitably will get hanged, and Arabella replies : “I suppose you think if your brother was to kill my enemy the law would punish him for it ; but pray undeceive yourself, miss ; the law has no power over heroes ; they may kill as many men as they please without being called to any account for it ; and the more lives they take away the greater is their reputation for virtue and glory.” Here is a delightful little touch illustrating the consistency of human nature, especially of feminine nature, from age to age : Arabella, most tender-hearted of virgins, propounds the theory that “the blood that is shed for a lady enhances the value of her charms,” and she refers with reverent admiration to “Mandane, Cleopatra, and Statira, the most illustrious names in antiquity, for each of whom haply an hundred thousand men were killed.” But in upon the impossible and demented Arabella breaks the real woman : “I must confess,” interrupted Miss Glanville, “I should not be sorry to have a duel or two fought for me in Hyde Park ; but then I would not have any blood shed for the world.” Full of such dainty strokes is this brightest of novels-with-a-purpose ; full, too, of situations of broad humour. It is pitiable to know that an author as clever as industrious, the honoured friend of Johnson and of Richardson, died at the age of eighty-four, after years of pain, poverty, and ob-

scurity. But perhaps it is even more pitiable that some of our distinguished manufacturers of fiction cannot lighten, like Mrs Lennox, the dough, the heavy dough of moral purpose with the yeast of playful fancy.

“THE SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE”

When a man has translated the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, and translated them with sympathy and skill, we may expect to find in him a large spirit of tolerance and fine human kindness. In the case of the Rev. Richard Graves, who, a hundred years ago, produced what is still one of the best English versions of the great emperor's thoughts, this expectation is not disappointed, even when we read his remarkable novel, *The Spiritual Quixote*, which professes to be a satire upon Methodism. In the present day one notices, especially during the session of the Wesleyan Conference, an inclination on the part of English Church bishops and clergymen to speak of the Wesleyan flock as in some sense sheep of the fold by law established, although, owing to the enthusiasm of the shepherd—an enthusiasm which the speakers politely refrain from describing as regrettable—these same sheep at present are on the wrong side of the gate. A few extreme Anglicans who nourish in their secret souls carking doubts of the validity of their own orders, and insist all the more on the supreme importance of Anglican ordination, may scream and rage about the sin of schism, but the average English Churchman undoubtedly regards

Wesleyanism with a comparative sympathy which he does not always extend to other branches of the Non-conformists. In our times, when the spirit of toleration has leavened the fierce creeds of narrow sectaries, it is not surprising that its influence should be felt within the confines of a great, strong, and enlightened Church. To the outside student of history there is nothing inherently improbable in the supposition that the creed and polity of a Wesleyan President may possibly approximate to the creed and polity of Christ almost as closely as those of an Archbishop of Canterbury. One source of the strength of the Church is the fact that in recent years she has not ignored or repudiated the discoveries of secular science and criticism merely because they do not appear in all cases to correspond with ecclesiastical tradition. It is not to be wondered at, then, that Churchmen and Wesleyans, who hold much in common, should testify to sentiments of mutual regard.

But at the time when the red-hot oratory of Whitfield was still vibrating in the air, when the Church was still trembling beneath the shock of the Wesley secession, one would not expect to find in a country parson, taught by position and interest to look upon Dissenting preachers as a medical graduate looks upon the seller of patent pills, a large sentiment of tolerance combined with a most daring sense of humour. The first of these qualities I believe the Rev. Richard Graves owed to Marcus Aurelius; the second is born in a man, not made. Where they are united with the literary faculty an author may do work of the highest

quality. *The Spiritual Quixote* is a very remarkable book, because it reproduces some of the best properties of its great model. I do not remember any other English writer who has caught quite so exactly the art of Cervantes in hiding fine tragi-comedy beneath the veil of satiric farce. In Graves's novel the farce is obvious ; the clerical trades unionist will not spare his scorn of the “blacklegs” who are working for salvation at less than the accepted rate of wages ; the scholar, with his knowledge of the greatest things that have been thought and said in the world, cannot restrain his mirth at the fervid crudities of a preaching tinker. But this is all on the surface ; beneath it you find a saddened impatience with an idle, demoralised Church, which leaves the people to the leadership of preaching tinkers, and an amusement which approaches grief at a people that accept for reason and argument the wind-sawing enthusiasms of their leaders. “As a true rational system of religion,” writes this disciple of Aurelius, “contributes to the happiness of society and of every individual : so enthusiasm not only tends to the confusion of society, but to undermine the foundation of all religion and to introduce in the end scepticism of opinion and licentiousness of practice.” So, passing from general to particular, while he has “a very good opinion of Mr Wesley and Mr Whitfield and of their first endeavours to revive the practice of primitive piety and devotion,” he is afraid “that there have already and will hereafter from their examples start up mechanical teachers, who will preach themselves instead of Christ, aiming at applause and popularity.”

The "advertisement" to the novel sets forth as the author one "Christopher Collop," curate of Cotswold, and Mr Graves writes of the supposititious Kit that, "although he did not approve of the Methodists rambling about the country as many of them do, yet he was suspected to favour them in his heart, and continued to do so to the day of his death." An avowal thus paraded at the outset of an unflinching satire might well make us doubt the sincerity of Mr Graves's "favour"; yet in truth he is honest enough in his approval, and fearless in his confession that Methodism is no wanton schism, but the inevitable outcome of the laxity of the Church. Mrs Wildgoose, the mother of the "Spiritual Quixote," is made to say that "if the clergy would but do their duty as the canons of the Church required there would be no necessity for these extraordinary proceedings." Although, as I have said, Graves dislikes enthusiasm, he has no sympathy with the slipshod pulpit methods of the clergy. "When a preacher," he says, "reads his sermon with as much coldness and indifference as he would read a newspaper or an Act of Parliament, he must not be surprised if his audience discover the same indifference, or even take a nap, especially if the service be after dinner." He notes that an earnest and impassioned manner of preaching "has more effect upon the middling and lower ranks of mankind, for whose use sermons are chiefly intended," than closely reasoned discourses delivered in a dry and uninteresting manner. "And," he continues, "this certainly is one great advantage which the Methodists and other

fanatical preachers have over the regular clergy in rousing so many indolent, drowsy Christians to a sense of religion.” Such frank honesty as this tempers the satire which runs through the absurd crusade of Mr Geoffry Wildgoose and his squire, Jerry Tugwell. The hardest strokes of Mr Graves’s wit are not directed against sectarianism ; it is to be feared that the good clergyman’s pagan learning tempted him to see in a ludicrous light certain things and experiences which devout believers look upon as most solemnly sacred. Thus the account of the conversion of Mr Wildgoose, though supremely witty, is perhaps somewhat shocking. Mr Wildgoose began to find grace owing to a quarrel with his vicar as to whether or not a certain glass door should pay tax as a window. Mr Wildgoose was a regular church-goer, and he always followed the lessons in a Latin Bible. Now, the Sunday after the dispute aforementioned the parson preached on hypocrisy, and Mr Wildgoose, conscious of certain tender passages with a lady’s maid, looked upon the sermon as a personal attack. He never went to church again, but began to “grease the wheels of his soul” with Puritan literature, rejoicing particularly in a work of good old Baxter, entitled *Shoves for — Christians* ; modern propriety forbids one to fill in the blank. This was the beginning of the spiritual change that impelled him to tramp round the country in search of converts, a mission from which he was ultimately withdrawn by love of a charming young lady and by the insidious persuasions of a worldly-wise old doctor. *The Spiritual Quixote* is a book

not easy to find, but it is worth searching after, for it will afford amusement and even edification to those who read it aright. Keep well in mind the honest liberality of the author, and the admirable skill with which he catches the fine essence of Quixotism, and you will forgive his occasional irreverence and his pagan propensity to see the comic side of serious things.

THE "CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS"

If any theological student some day should be moved to write a history of religious ideals, eighteenth-century England will give him trouble. Periods much more remote are much more comprehensible to the modern man than that odd time when urbane indifference appeared to lodge peacefully in the same mind along with the narrowest and most technical bigotry. Bigotry as a means—for instance, the bigotry of the shrewd politicians of the Holy Office—is intelligible, but bigotry as an end, the spirit animating the religious controversies of the eighteenth century, evades our apprehension. Hence when reading the controversial works upon morals and theology produced at that time—such a work, for example, as the once famous *Centaur not Fabulous*—the student of to-day is constantly "pulled up" in doubt, like one construing sentences in an unfamiliar language: the words are plain and the meanings can be found in a lexicon, yet the reader ever and anon suspects that the subtle essence of the author's thought has escaped him. For one thing, words are like coins: their outward

appearance may be permanent, but their value varies from year to year from ten thousand complex causes. A sovereign at one time may be worth just one-tenth of a railway share, at another it may be worth several complete shares ; a great rise in the value of the coin when measured by this particular standard. Similarly, when the author of the *Centaur not Fabulous* lauds an honest man and we are perplexed by his enthusiasm, we must remember that when he calls a man honest he may mean one thing, and when we use the adjective we may mean something very different. It is necessary to bear in mind that the fluctuations of the literary Stock Exchange are very great when we deal with eighteenth-century theology, and to doubt our ability to put an exact value upon the quotations. Perhaps the first thing that strikes one in reading such a book as the *Centaur not Fabulous* is the author's apt familiarity with the pagan classics and his inability to appreciate their spirit. He has read, marked, learned them, but in no wise inwardly digested them. Fine lines of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid flow from his pen, giving to his pages of acrid intolerance an appearance of gracious scholarship. This is a virtue too little recognised in our day. Our author, according to modern ideas, is harsh and benighted, but that is no reason why his style should be offensive also. As well might one contend that because a man is hump-backed or bow-legged therefore he must never wear well-made clothes. Apt quotation was one of the graces of style which eighteenth-century writers cultivated ; the topics they discussed most of them have ceased to

interest us, yet we can read the discussions because of their pleasant manner. Our present-day problems in their turn will cease to attract, and then our writers will cease to be read.

The *Centaur not Fabulous* contains much quaint moralising and rationalising after the manner of the time. Divines who could discover a spiritual and prophetic meaning in the Song of Solomon were not likely to miss an opportunity of torturing to moral purposes the myths of pagan antiquity. Our author narrates the intrigue from which Chiron the Centaur sprang, and, unless I do him injustice, narrates it with none too delicate a relish. Then he slips on his Geneva gown, mounts the pulpit, and declares that "this fable of Saturn and Ops means that jealous conscience, the soul's lawful wife, will ever disturb licentious pleasure, and that there is no means of escaping the persecution but by becoming quite brutal in it." The hidden meaning of the fabled centaur is "that beings of origin truly celestial may debase their nature, forfeit their character, and sink themselves by licentiousness into perfect beasts." Pursuing his illustrations of the wickedness of the "man of pleasure," he comes to the fable of Ixion and his frustrate amour with Juno. I will not spoil the moral by paraphrasing it; here it is as it stands:—"This amour of Ixion imports the great height of our expectation and as great depth of our disappointment in illicit love. And Jupiter's interposing the cloud intimates that Heaven decrees this disappointment, and that therefore it is madness to flatter ourselves with

hopes of the contrary. The fable would further teach us that our imagination, stirred by passion, imposes not only on our understandings, but our very senses, which take clouds for goddesses and adore darkness as divine." This is not very far removed from the matter of a modern young curate. The subject must seem coarse to our tastes, and the exposition of a pagan myth out of place in a sermon. But very much the same stuff is talked every Sunday about the story of Samson and Delilah. One great difference, however, between the eighteenth-century divine and the twentieth-century curate is that the former had a keen sense of humour, while the latter rarely has any. Not long ago in one of our parish churches a young gentleman, preaching about the much-abused yet much-courted rich man (whom for the purposes of the moment he assumed to be represented by his congregation), shook his finger at the people and exclaimed, "Thou fool!" Then, as if remembering the unpleasant consequences attaching to a reckless use of the epithet, he continued in tones of gentle deprecation, "That is to say, 'Thou senseless person.'"

The author of the *Centaur not Fabulous* is saved from such like banality by his sense of humour. I wish I dare indicate his interpretation of the gift of Deianira to Hercules which all unwittingly on her part "gave him a distemper so virulent as proved mortal." But alas! other times other manners! and what a hundred and fifty years ago may have been profitable and must have been amusing, now is impossible as a matter of

public discussion. So far we have travelled along with our author without much difficulty; it is when he comes to dogmatic theology that we part company with him. He holds up as the root of all evil what he is pleased to call infidelity, that is to say, doubt as to the plenary inspiration of the *Centaur not Fabulous*. Infidelity, he says, is the parent of the love of pleasure, adding somewhat inconsistently that "pleasure and infidelity reciprocally generate each other, and he that would reduce one must strike at both." This is part of the traditional policy of the clergy to identify the "infidel" with the voluptuary, regardless of the fact that the "sceptics" denounced, taken as a class, have been and, indeed, are probably the cleanest-living body of men that ever existed. Our author as an honest man cannot entirely close his eyes to the fact, so he proceeds to make the unfortunate unbeliever's virtue the very pivot of his damnation. "The deist's life," he says, "howsoever laudable, is criminal in itself. A virtuous life rising from a corrupted faith is as an angel of light supported by a cloven foot, which many seem not to believe, otherwise they would not be so often pleading the virtue of deists as a full absolution of that sect; whereas we are expressly told that the just shall live by faith; that is, even the just shall not live, that is be saved, without it." The tenacity with which certain Protestants clung to this odious belief—perhaps a survival from the cruelties of fetishism—was a crime as injurious to society as the political unscrupulousness and moral corruption of Rome. It kept the souls of

men enslaved by priestcraft—a priestcraft of the Bethel parson and the local preacher not less harmful than that of the Order of Jesus. And that to-day it is an almost extinct superstition, is due more to the resolute intelligence of men than to the repentance of their pastors.

TRYPHIODORUS

In an empty room of some old house one may have felt a faint breath from the past to play upon one's face. The very air seems stuffy from the lungs of dead and gone generations ; “here there was laughter of old, there was weeping, haply of lovers none ever will know” ; here was heard the first weak cry of life, as was launched into the world a new being freighted with cargo of loving hopes and fears ; here, “unto dying eyes the casement slowly glowed a glimmering square,” and all the hopes and the fears perished for ever more ; not a trace remains of them that laughed and wept of old ; they are known not of those that share their blood, that bear their names, that perchance reflect their features and repeat their natures ; and in the dusty dark of a deserted room one is moved to take off one's hat, saluting the dead that are dead utterly. A still stronger emotion sometimes rises within us when turning the pages of an old book. What can be more pathetic than to read a meaningless name written upon the fly-leaf ? Once it was full of meaning : those who saw and heard it perceived in it the brief epitome of a man. Then he died, and his children after him

cherished a fading memory of him. To his grandchildren he was but a misty dream, and their children in turn knew not even that such a one had lived. In a certain copy of a book entitled *The Destruction of Troy*, which is a text and translation of one Tryphiodorus, made a hundred and sixty years ago by "J. Merrick, Scholar of Trinity College, Oxford," is written the name "Thomas Gibson." There, upon the page, rested a living hand as the man wrote the words ; and now he is, but for this scrap of writing, as though he had not been. Probably no one living can claim him for ancestor, no one knows who or what he was, or a single thing that he thought or said or did ; he is a name in one old book that chance has spared, and nothing more. Now see the curious whims of fortune ! This Tryphiodorus, who lived at least thirteen hundred years ago, seems to have done nothing more worthy of remembrance than "Thomas Gibson" may have done. What remains of his work hardly repays the trouble of reading ; it tells us nothing that others have not told us much better ; yet for him fate has secured perpetual existence. Still more odd : we know nearly as much of Tryphiodorus as we do of the interesting and accomplished scholar who edited and translated him. Merrick is known only to Biblical students as the author of a version of the Psalms and one or two theological books, and to classical scholars because his notes to Tryphiodorus are quoted in certain German editions of Hesychius. Yet in his day he was of some account, for Bishop Lowth wrote of him that he was

“one of the best of men and most eminent of scholars”; and a French admirer declared, “Il doit être compté au nombre des enfants précoces,” a statement which is justified by the fact that his Tryphiodorus, with its extraordinary wealth of learning, was published in his nineteenth year.

Merrick lived when it was the wont of literary critics to pass their time star-gazing; now they go through the world digging for roots. The latter process doubtless is more profitable, but the former must have been pleasanter. In his day German methods had not been invented, and consequently one may read his introduction and innumerable notes without losing one's unscholarly but cherished illusions. For example, he does not wipe out all picturesque epithets; he does not reprove us for worshipping the “ox-eyed Lady Hera,” and, after a dissertation on the connection between the Pelasgic Hera and the Indian Io, suggest the substitution of “Potnia Hera Boopis”—an appellation to be taken without a meaning, as one might write “Mrs Mary Jones.” Which, with much more of the same sort, is no doubt “orl korrekt,” and in accordance with the latest philological lights; only if the poets of old had sung such stuff in the echoing halls of kings, the potentates would have given, like Saul, a striking proof of annoyance, and speedily would have gotten them minstrels that knew their business better. Tryphiodorus's ideas of poetry, as something that can be manufactured like butter and measured off like calico, were not unlike those which one may

attribute to a typical German critic. He was a great producer of machine-made poetry all turned out to an exact but fantastical pattern. In addition to his *Destruction of Troy*, which is a modest attempt to complete the *Iliad*, he is said to have written an *Odyssey* all on his own account, and the great feature of this work, which consisted of twenty-four books, was that each book in turn lacked a letter of the alphabet. Thus "a" did not occur in the first book, "b" in the second, and so on. Concerning this marvellous "poem," a certain Mr Addison, in a journal called the *Spectator*, remarked: "I shall only observe upon this Head that if the Work I have here mentioned had been now extant, the *Odyssey* of Tryphiodorus, in all probability, would have been oftener quoted by our learned Pedants than the *Odyssey* of Homer. What a perpetual Fund it would have been of obsolete Words and Phrases, unusual Barbarisms and Rusticities, absurd Spellings and complicated Dialects! I make no Question but it would have been looked upon as one of the most valuable Treasuries of the *Greek Tongue*." We may infer from this "diverting Passage" that Addison did not think very highly of the efforts of learned pedants in the direction of literary criticism.

As becomes an editor, Mr Merrick makes out the best case he can for his author. He tells us that Nicholas Leonicus, a fifteenth-century writer, speaks of Tryphiodorus "in Terms of Rapture and Admiration"; that Lorenzo Crasso, an Italian writer, "has complimented his *Odyssey* with the Title of a very In-

genious Invention." He would have us to believe that Tryphiodorus's repute in the ancient world must have been great, because Suidas calls him a "grammarian," a title given to Callimachus and other fine poets, and one "particularly bestowed on such as wrote well and politely in every Kind." More material to the defence of this person is the fact that true poets have condescended to trifle with "lipogrammatic" verse, as the effusions are called from which any particular letter is excluded. Pindar is said to have composed a lipogrammatic ode in which the letter "sigma" did not occur, and Athenæus points out similar attempts in Sophocles and Euripides. Mr Merrick does not mention, and probably was not aware, that Lope de Vega wrote five tales, from each of which one of the five vowels was excluded. About the lipogrammatists Isaac Disraeli has a good story, to the effect that a Persian poet read to the celebrated Jami a "gazel" of his own composition which Jami did not like ; but the writer protested it was, notwithstanding, a very curious sonnet, for the letter "Aliff" was not to be found in any one of the words. Jami replied : "You can do a better thing yet ; take away all the letters from every word you have written !" Trifles of like kind always have attracted certain minds. Peter de Rega, a canon of Rheims, wrote a summary of the Old and New Testaments in elegiac verse ; his poem was divided into three-and-twenty sections, and each lacked one letter. There is a mediæval prose work bearing the modest title, *Fabii Claudii Gordiani Fulgentii Viri Clarissimi de*

ætatibus Mundi et Hominis, opus mirificum, which is constructed on the same plan ; the first chapter, though it relates the history of Adam, lacks the letter “a,” and the second lacks the letter “b,” though it describes the death of Abel. This writer deserves to be remembered along with that M. de Gomberville, member of the French Academy, who composed a large book in five volumes, in all of which he avoided using the harmless, necessary word *car* because “it did not please him.” In justice to Tryphiodorus we must allude to a theory propounded by Bishop Eustathius, who believed his *Odyssey* to have been that of Homer re-written to the exclusion of the letter “sigma.” “Perhaps,” says the bishop, “he had a lisp in his voice which might oblige him to drop the letter ‘s,’ that it might not occasion any difficulty in his pronunciation ; as those who are apt to stammer are particularly careful to conceal their impediment by avoiding the letter ‘r.’” And, finally, in taking leave of Mr Merrick and his lipogrammatist, we would mention that to his volume is prefixed a list of the names of upwards of 1200 subscribers. This book, be it remembered, was published away back in the dark ages before there was universal scientific education ; yet these 1200 ladies and gentlemen — there are scores of the former in the list—took interest enough in an obscure Greek writer to buy an elaborate edition of his poems. How many persons in these glorious days of cheap snippets ever heard the name of Tryphiodorus ?

“EPISTOLÆ OBSCURORUM VIRORUM”

In A.D. 1532, one Justus Menius, writing the retort of the Humanists to the *Apology of Crotus Rubeanus*, declared: “It were better that the *Iliad* itself should perish than the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, whose trenchant wit has done more mischief to the supremacy of Rome than all the grave treatises of the age.” It is one of the strange ironies of fate that this work, which played such an important part in the story of human progress, should be so utterly forgotten that it can only be read with full appreciation by the few persons who have made a special study of the characters and scenes of the Reformation. There are hundreds of highly educated persons to-day to whom the *Epistolæ* and their authors—Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus—are names and nothing more. Yet Herder once remarked that the satire “effected for Germany incomparably more than *Hudibras* for England, or *Gargantua* for France, or the Knight of La Mancha for Spain,” and Sir William Hamilton asserted that “it gave the victory to Reuchlin over the Begging Friars, and to Luther over the Court of Rome”; while a writer in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* ranks the *Epistolæ* above the Marprelate tracts and compares them with the *Satyre Ménippée*. The battle in which this satire slew its thousands is over, and the issue, let us hope, is settled for ever. Ecclesiastical obscurantism survives only as a feeble and dying influence

which nobody fears and every well-educated person despises. It is impossible for us to feel as men felt when the Theological Faculty of Cologne was a dominant influence in Europe, and when scholars quailed before the scholasticism of the Dominicans ; nor can we appreciate the deadliness of the thrusts of the satirists as did their contemporaries, who recognised every personal and local allusion. Yet to us it does not seem that the Humanists accomplished half as much as their friends claim for them. Indeed, it is always the fate of the intellectuals to prepare the way for the practical revolutionary. The school of Erasmus and Reuchlin included all the best brains of the period in England ; for instance, Sir Thomas More, Fisher, Linacre, Grocyn, Colet, Latimer, and Tunstall were of the confederation. The Humanists were brilliant, comfortable men, who bitterly ridiculed the intellectual folly and the moral perversity of ecclesiasticism ; but they shrank from subverting the ecclesiastical order of things, and if an obstinate ex-monk had not flung down the gage of battle at Wittenberg, reform might not have come for generations, and perhaps not at all.

Great events often issue from little sources. In 1509 an idea of making money out of the Jews occurred to the mind of an apostate Hebrew named Pfefferkorn, a person who combined the occupation of a butcher with the avocation of burglary. He had turned Christian to escape the consequences of his crimes, and now, armed with credentials from the worthy Dominicans, he approached the Emperor and

besought a mandate to examine and destroy such Jewish books as questioned the doctrines of Christianity, well knowing that the Jews would pay handsomely to redeem their books. The Emperor, persuaded by his pious sister, granted the mandate, and then began the struggle between darkness and light which ended in the final overthrow of mediævalism. The alliance of the Dominicans with Pfefferkorn was doubtless dictated by the desire to strike at Reuchlin, one of the greatest scholars of the age, and one of the greatest leaders of the Humanists. Mr Francis Griffin Stokes, in his introduction to the new edition of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, with text, learned notes, and spirited translation, a fine product of modern scholarship, remarks: “Somewhat close intercourse with learned Jews of the best type naturally aroused in Reuchlin’s heart a kindly interest in the scattered and persecuted people, whose sacred, philosophical, and mystical literature he had now grappled with for ten years.” It was against Reuchlin, as a champion of the Jews, that the obscurantists struck. The polemics signed by the illiterate Pfefferkorn were probably written by Ortwin Gratius, a prominent “don” of Cologne, and the wordy war between the scholar and the theologian was the prelude of the Reformation. In the middle of the contest Europe was plunged into inextinguishable laughter by the appearance of the *Epistolæ*, a pasquil launched by an unknown hand, “which fell among the persecutors of Reuchlin, scattering dismay

and ruin in its explosion," as Hamilton remarked. It was a thin volume of less than forty pages containing letters from certain "obscure men" addressed to Magister Ortwin Gratius, written in the doggiest of dog Latin, which was hardly a caricature of the monkish Latinity of the day. These letters, with a grave and pungent irony which has never been surpassed, reveal the intellectual density and the looseness of life of the theologians.

In our day, when literary taste is sophisticated by the knowledge of multitudinous forms and triumphs of irony, it is difficult to understand how the world was enchanted by these letters; and so free is their treatment of delicate subjects that it is equally difficult, modern prudery being regarded, to give an adequate account of their method and their charm. We may take, however, the letter from Magister Joannes Pellifex (otherwise currier) to illustrate the sledge-hammer ridicule with which the author overwhelmed the obscurantists. Pellifex explains to Ortwin that recently he had doffed his cap to two Jews in the street, taking them for Doctors of Divinity, whereupon his companion, a Bachelor of Frankfort, had accused him of mortal sin. He replies: "That is true enough when the deed is done wittingly, but I did it in ignorance, and ignorance excuseth sin." The Bachelor retorts that he himself had once made genuflexion to a wooden image of a Jew in a church, mistaking it for St Peter. "Then I saw that it was meant for a Jew and immediately repented; neverthe-

less, at my confession my confessor told me that the sin was mortal, and he told me that he could not have shriven me unless he had had episcopal powers, because it was a reserved case. And he said if I had erred wilfully and not through ignorance, it would have been a papal case. Ignorance cannot excuse that sin, because you ought to have been vigilant, and the Jews always wear a round yellow patch on their cloaks in front, which you could have seen as well as I ; wherefore your ignorance is crass and of no avail towards absolution of your sin." In his dilemma Pellifex writes to Magister Ortwin : "Seeing that you are a profound theologian, I beg of you earnestly and humbly that you will deign to resolve this my question and tell me whether this sin is mortal or venial, and mine an ordinary or an episcopal or a papal case." By such mordant pleasantries did the obscure men prepare the way for Luther.

CASANOVA

Mr Arthur Symons, in the *North American Review*, performed a daring task, but one of very great interest to students of literature. He published an account of his examination of the papers of Casanova, which remain in the library of the Château Waldstein at Dux, in Bohemia. It is safe to assume that the general magazine reader in America knows nothing about Casanova ; perhaps this is the reason why Mr Symons chose to publish his essay in a New York

magazine. Of those on both sides of the Atlantic who are acquainted with the notorious memoirs of this adventurer, many may think that the less said and written about him the better. This is an opinion from which I respectfully dissent. If, as was believed for many years, the memoirs had been a forgery by Stendhal, although the feat would have been one of prodigious ability, they might have been forgotten with advantage. The foul imaginings of a man of letters can have only a pathological value. But it has been proved beyond dispute that the memoirs are an historical document of remarkable truthfulness, and consequently they are beyond all price to students of eighteenth-century society and affairs. Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the sweetest and sanest of writers, had the courage to say so ; and many other distinguished men, Thackeray and Carlyle among the number, gave evidence of their opinion by cribbing freely from the memoirs. The final settlement, therefore, of the problem of the authorship is a matter which ought not to be passed over in silence. During his lifetime Casanova, whose versatility was almost superhuman, published a good many works, including essays on philosophy, mathematics, and theology ; an Italian translation of the *Iliad*, and, most famous of all, the account of his escape from the Venetian prison, the Piombi. This is one of the little masterpieces of literature, and before the days of football it was devoured by nearly every schoolboy in Europe. Research has verified Casanova's story in minute particulars. The marks of

his escape are still to be seen on the walls of the prison, and the Venetian records contain an account of it, and mention the name of the monk who was the companion of his flight. This part of the story, at any rate, is no fiction, but as it was published separately before the memoirs it might have been incorporated by Stendhal if he forged the complete work.

Casanova died in 1798, and it was not until 1820 that an Italian, named Carlo Angiolini, submitted to the firm of Brockhaus, of Leipzig, a manuscript purporting to be the memoirs of Casanova. During the next six years these publishers produced a bowdlerised German translation. The original, which was in French, was submitted to a French professor at Dresden, who edited it, toning down the narrative according to his taste and polishing Casanova's vigorous but often incorrect French. This version appeared in twelve volumes, at intervals between 1828 and 1838. The earlier volumes bore the imprint of Brockhaus, but that respectable firm seems to have taken alarm at the contents of the work, and they issued the later volumes with "A Bruxelles" on the title-page. The memoirs attracted immediate attention, and Ugo Foscolo, in the *Westminster Review*, and Querard and Paul Lacroix, expressed doubts as to their authenticity. For fifty years most scholars accepted the theory that they were a clever but unsavoury forgery, probably by Stendhal. In 1881 the late M. Armand Baschet tackled the problem in the *Livre*, a literary magazine now unhappily defunct. By industrious research he established pretty con-

clusively the authorship of Casanova. It was, however, reserved for Mr Symons to remove every vestige of doubt. Casanova was born, a chance child, in Venice in the year 1725. His boyhood and early manhood were spent in wandering about Italy, Greece, France, and Austria. His wit, his irresistible address, and his impudence made life easy and pleasant for him, since they opened to him the best society and procured for him those endless *bonnes fortunes* which he records with such audacious circumstantiality. Luck at gambling seems to have kept him in pretty constant luxury, and even when luck was occasionally against him his indomitable spirits made privation only an interesting experience. He was thirty when he escaped from the Piombi, and the fame of that exploit procured for him admission to every court of Europe. For the next nineteen years he wandered from country to country, and there was hardly a man distinguished by birth or brains, from Madrid to Moscow, from London to Constantinople, whom Casanova did not meet, and about whom he has not something interesting to say. He was presented to George III., and his picture of the English court and society is as vivid as the picture painted by Pepys a hundred years before. In 1774 Casanova made his peace with the Venetian Government, and returned as a secret agent of the Inquisitors, and remained in their employ for ten years. In 1784 he met Count Waldstein in Paris, and accepted his invitation to become librarian at Dux. In this secluded château the last fourteen years of his life were spent, and

his restless spirit found exercise and solace in intense and manifold literary occupations.

Wherever the statements of the writer can be tested they always prove to be true. In some respects his claims to prowess put too heavy a strain on the reader's credulity; but taken as a whole the work may be accepted as a true life-story, and a true picture of European manners in the eighteenth century. The main business of Casanova's life, or the portion of it covered by the *Mémoires*, was of such a nature that, because he relates his business enterprises with perfect frankness, his book is impossible for general readers. Sound critics, however, will not condemn it as a piece of mere nastiness. Casanova seems as pure as Dian when compared with many of his Italian and French contemporaries. To himself and to the society in which he moved there was nothing in his confessions that would seem a proper cause for shame. Probably he never wrote a word out of nastiness, and his warmest colours are laid on with a simple and sincere desire to paint a true picture of himself and the people about him. Only two works can be mentioned together with these *Mémoires*—the *Diary* of Pepys and the *Confessions* of Rousseau—and to both of them in some respects they are superior. Casanova was a much cleverer man of letters than Pepys, and, swindler and libertine as he was, he was a more honest man than Rousseau. A modern critic cleverly points out that the revelations of Rousseau portray a sickly, filthy mania, while Casanova paints for us a strong, sane man, who is wicked only in

his predominant natural instincts. Bad as he was, I should class him above Pepys. There is something abhorrent in Pepys's alternate sins and repentances, his escapades with Mrs Lane of an afternoon and his remorse when he returns to his wife of an evening ; after due penitence his conscience, like Gautier's heroine, acquits him with the injunction, "Go and sin as much as you can."

Casanova, on the other hand, rises far above such ineffectual scruples. He never repents anything, and is never conscious of any need of repentance. He tells us without a blush how by an abominable stratagem he swindled a kind old lady, Madame d'Urfé, and he thinks of nothing but the cleverness of his plot. He writes a long passage of practical hints to the young libertine with just such pride and urbane condescension as a great cricketer might show in writing a handbook for beginners. Yet he has his principles, and any violation of them wakens in him a lofty indignation. Mercenary love, for instance, he abhors. One of the most painful chapters in the book describes his pursuit of a young married woman who repulsed him with scorn. The husband was poor, and perceived in the attentions of Casanova a chance of relieving his necessities. At last the woman yielded to the importunities of her vile spouse and capitulated to Casanova, explaining at the same time her reasons for doing so and her unchanged loathing for him. Casanova drove her away with reproaches that cut like whipcord into the very flesh of the reader. What with willing sentiment was

a virtue in his eyes, out of reluctant necessity became a hateful vice. Such were the best morals of his time. The mother of his daughter was the wife of a lawyer of position in Rome, and that complaisant gentleman was wont playfully to tease his wife by calling the child "Giacomina," the feminine form of the name of the man through whom she had fallen, just as a man of to-day might rally his spouse about some bygone schoolgirl flirtation. Not even the pen of Casanova can make real to twentieth-century Englishmen the life, the mind, and the temper of eighteenth-century Italians.

A good many years ago it occurred to M. Octave Uzane to get copies of some of the papers at Dux, but the investigation was perfunctory and nothing came of it. In 1898 the present Count Waldstein invited Mr Symons to visit the château, and to go through Casanova's papers, which remain in the library just as he left them. Mr Symons jumped at the opportunity, and his examination was conclusive. He had already been permitted to inspect the manuscript of the memoirs which is preserved by Messrs Brockhaus at Leipzig. From one of the manuscript bundles some pages are missing, and those pages were found by Mr Symons in one of Casanova's letter boxes at Dux. But that was not the full extent of Mr Symons's discovery. Casanova's correspondence, the letters received by him, are in those boxes, in bundles as he left them, tied up with the most scrupulous care. Some of them are from European public men, but, as every reader of the

memoirs would expect, most of them are from women. Now, like Pepys's *Diary*, these memoirs are not fit reading for young persons. They are largely occupied with stories of almost incredible amours, related with small regard for decency. But, such is the insidious charm which Casanova dead continues to exercise, that the severest moralist cannot read the memoirs without feeling a warm interest in the fate and fortunes of the ladies so frankly and so vividly discussed by the author. And there, lying in a remote Bohemian castle, are the actual letters of the victims, happy and contented victims of Casanova's wiles, who, despite his fickleness, remained for half a century his devoted friends and correspondents. There in a precious bundle are the letters from "Henriette," which Casanova promised to publish if he survived her ; but he died before her. There are the letters, loving and ill-spelled, from Manon Baletti, which he lent to his Dutch innamorata Esther. Mr Symons hints that someone is doing for these memoirs what Mr Wheatley did for Pepys's *Diary*. If an ungarbled edition is to be published, it is to be hoped that some capable person may be permitted to make a thorough examination of the papers at Dux, with a view to the addition of such letters and manuscripts as are relevant to the narrative.

MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF

Some years ago a cynical person divided modern literature into three classes : the erotic, the neurotic,

and the tommy-rotic. But there are some works which exhibit the properties of all three classes, and none, perhaps, more remarkably than the *Memoirs of Marie Bashkirtseff*. When the future historian of nineteenth-century letters draws to the completion of his task he will find no problem more perplexing than the vogue which the diary of this half-crazy, consumptive girl had in England. In France, where the great mass of art and letters tended to become decadent, not to say putrid, it will not seem surprising that these most unpleasant books should for a brief space have held the public fancy. If our historian chances to light upon a copy of the present edition, he may find a clue to the puzzle in the translator's preface, where it is said of the first instalment of the diary that "most readers were a little, or more than a little, shocked by this laying bare of a girl's heart. 'I tell all, yes all!' That appeared too terrible a novelty to be quite the thing in respectable society." He will probably remark upon this statement that intimate revelations by men and women were no great novelty in the time of Marie Bashkirtseff, and, further, that a book cordially praised by Mr Gladstone was not likely to be found shocking by the generality of contemporary English readers. Many writers have "told all" quite as freely as Marie Bashkirtseff, but the interesting point is that only in recent years has the mere telling been accounted a virtue apart from the value of the thing told. There was a short period in this country when a certain school of critics had almost persuaded

the public that the first duty of an author was, so to speak, to undress, quite regardless of the question whether that which should be revealed was beautiful or ugly. We are now reverting to a more sane judgment. Most thoughtful readers, while not giving a too ardent encouragement to the literature of intimate self-revelation, do not in any way shrink from it, and judge it, like all other literary work, by its results: if what is revealed was worth revealing, the book is good; if not, the book is bad.

The fascination which the *Diary* of Mr Pepys exercises upon all kinds of readers is not due to his amazing frankness; it arises from the fact that what he tells us about himself and other persons is intrinsically interesting, and the *Diary* admits us to closest intimacy with a man thoroughly worth knowing. He is at all points so sane that even his undignified peccadilloes only provoke a shrug of the shoulders. But Pepys, whether frivolous or serious, is always worth listening to. If he goes to the play or to a concert, or to see a picture, he is sure to make some shrewd, penetrating remark which everyone may remember with pleasure and advantage. If we find him in his office engrossed by the affairs of the Navy, he displays such a quick and sturdy aptitude for business that one wishes he were alive now to keep loquacious admirals in order. If he meets any man or woman out of the common, he draws a picture with a few strokes of his pencil, which makes us know the model as we know our own familiar

friends. And even if he admits us to his domestic arcana, though we may sometimes be a little scandalised, it would be the merest hypocrisy to pretend that we are not amused. Of course, it was very wrong of Mr Pepys to give Mrs Pepys such serious ground of complaint, and even worse to lose his temper when she remonstrated. In a well-conducted household husband and wife should not form a habit of calling each other names, or of tweaking one another's noses ; but when such storms do arise, and we find that they inevitably end in kisses and repentance, and perhaps in a new frock for the lady, we are not disposed to take a too serious view of the matter. At any rate, Pepys and his wife quarrelling, if it may so be said, rationally and humanly, are much less unpleasant to hear than the shrieks and ravings of hysterical patients. The diary of Marie Bashkirtseff records the inward communings of a diseased mind. The unhappy girl was ill-disciplined and ill-trained ; she was consumptive, hysterical, and eaten up with an egotism and vanity that approached, if they did not actually cross, the border-line of insanity. Had her surviving relatives been wise, they would either have thrown her diary into the fire, or have handed it over to medical specialists for private study in the interests of humanity.

The purpose with which the diary was written is thus declared by the writer : "Should I not live long enough to become famous, this Journal will be of interest to the naturalistic school ; for the life of a woman must always be curious told thus, day by day,

without any attempt at posing, as if no one in the world would ever read it, yet written with the intention of being read." From the standpoint of mere naturalism this admission destroys the value of the work. As a matter of fact, Marie is always posing ; never for an instant does she forget her audience, and she is ever wondering what kind of impression she is making upon them. Unfortunately, the poseuse has little interest for anyone except pathologists. She believed herself to be a supreme genius ; really she was a young painter of little more than average ability, the disciple of a school that sought to conceal its technical shortcomings behind pretentious theories. As a writer and thinker she has no claim to consideration. She did not even master the language in which she recorded her thoughts. "It is possible," she says, "my French is not French ; if I took heed I could write very correctly ; but it seems to me that certain incoherent thoughts require a perfect artlessness of expression." What she said was as imperfect as her way of saying it. About men and women her ideas were those of an unhealthy, flighty young woman ; with the exception of one or two flashes of cynical penetration, her diary affords no enlightenment as to the persons among whom she lived. Even upon painting, the one subject she knew something about, her opinion rests upon nothing better than whim and caprice. She babbles about the fashions, about her hair and her "marble shoulders" ; she does not shrink from recording that consumption has destroyed her resemblance to Venus Callipyge, and has

made her like Diana. A year before her death she wrote : "I amuse myself in my hair-dressing. Instead of disordering it, I leave the forehead frankly uncovered. Amid all these carefully dressed heads, it is a charming novelty. The hair twisted on top of the head and spreading naturally, and this magnificent brow of which I did not suspect either the beauty or the nobleness, change me altogether. I become of an imposing candour ; it seems to me that I am pontifical, or that I am descending from a throne. This gives a sweet gentleness to the bearing, an air of calm and strength. And this forehead, always hidden, is of an infantine purity ; I am fifteen years old." Those who wish to learn more about the infantine innocence of this moribund Venus Callipyge had better read her diary.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

Marryat was neither a "great writer" nor a "man of letters," as the phrases are commonly understood. To be both or either one must be an artist, a person in the aristocracy of letters, one who has left some mark on the course of literary history. The literary world, though small, is big enough to include many types and classes ; you have Richardson the obsequious tradesman and Scott the great lordly gentleman ; you have Johnson the rugged scholar and R. L. Stevenson the histrion. Wide as the poles asunder in character and in art, these men have some common quality in virtue of which they are men of letters and great writers.

What that quality is I do not profess to know. You may without difficulty get together a ton-weight of criticism on such men, and when you have read it all you will be quite sure—just as sure, in fact, as when you began—that they were great writers, but as to why you will be more in doubt than ever. Every critic of any pretensions writes an occasional essay upon some man of letters, publishes it in a magazine, and includes it in his next volume of collected works ; and these essays tell us all about the virtues and the vices of the chieftains of letters, and were it not for the unfortunate fact that no two of them agree in their diagnosis, we might be able to form some general rule as to what constitutes a man of letters. Yet, after all, this differing of the doctors does not matter much. Someone has said that we never need to be told what is right ; what we need is help to do that which we know to be right. And so, though we do not know why such or such a writer is or is not a man of letters, we do not require to be told whether he is one or not ; that knowledge comes by instinct.

We shall all agree that Marryat, the brilliant sailor, the comrade of Lord Cochrane, was not a man of letters. The fact stands revealed in the silence of the critics about him. So far as I can remember, no pontiff of criticism, no quantitative or qualitative analyst of letters, ever thought it worth while to write a magazine essay on any aspect of Marryat's genius. One never comes across articles on such subjects as "The Style of Marryat," "Marryat's Heroines," "Marryat and the

Relations of the Sexes," "The Home Life of Marryat," "Was Marryat a Good Husband?" "Was Mrs Marryat a Person to be pitied?" and the thousand-and-one other pleasant subjects of inquiry with which our gentlemanly "mind-your-own-business" generation amuses itself after the death of great men of letters, when there is no longer any reason to fear the law of libel. Sixty-one completed years have passed since Marryat died, and it has not yet occurred to the mind of a critic to inquire whether the author of *Peter Simple* ever made blue marks on his wife's arms. Could any proof be more conclusive that Marryat was not a great man of letters? But do not let us sneer at him on that account; there have been many writers of great books who have been, like him, excluded from the aristocracy of the pen. Take the case of Miss Corelli. All the authorities agree that she is not "literary"; but we know that she is a genius, for Mr Gladstone told her so in confidence, and the fact by some strange telepathy has been bruited over the earth. One illustrious name suggests others. I should say that Homer and Shakspeare were not strictly speaking men of letters, while Virgil and Ben Jonson were. Homer in the light of modern scholarship stands revealed as a syndicate, a literary "combine," an organisation for the cheap and efficient production of poetry, similar to those by which the Americans pack pork and manage steamships. No! the Messrs Homer & Co., Limited, could not have been men of letters. The case of Shakspeare is perhaps more doubtful; but I think

I can show sufficient cause for excluding him from the category. Did he ever behave like a man of letters ? There were circumstances in his life which, if properly employed, might have advertised his books for the next five hundred years. If he was really a man of letters, what has become of his wife's love-letters ? Why did he not tie them up in a box and give them to Susanna to be used at her discretion ? Certain matters connected with his marriage would have been invaluable from a publisher's standpoint. Mrs Shakspeare was his senior by a good many years, and the undue haste of Susanna to appear in this vale of tears aroused suspicions that the union was not altogether voluntary on William's part. Yet he never left a line for publication on these subjects ; he never put the name of the dark lady in a sealed envelope, with instructions that it should be opened a hundred years after his death ; he never corrected his proofs ; he never worried whether he should be paid on the half-profit system or by royalties. And still there are deluded enthusiasts who pretend that Shakspeare was a man of letters.

Marryat, then, is in good company. I do not, of course, class him as the equal of the Homeric Syndicate (Peisistratus, president ; Aristarchus, general manager ; and F. A. Wolf, secretary), or with Miss Corelli, or even with Shakspeare. But it is a comfort to think that a story-teller so well-beloved should be even a humble member of the same family as those famous non-literary authors. Nobody writes essays or preaches sermons about *Peter Simple*, but nearly eighty years after

its first appearance enterprising publishers find profit by including it in popular series. It was Marryat's first great hit, and it launched him on a profitable story-telling business, which brought him in more than twenty thousand pounds. Peter took the public fancy from the moment of his birth. He was pirated in America before he was two years old, as a roughly printed volume now before me, bearing the imprint of Baltimore, 1836, conclusively proves ; and all through his life of more than threescore years and ten he has had thousands and tens of thousands of admiring friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Marryat's fame chiefly rests upon his two masterpieces, *Peter Simple* and *Midshipman Easy*, and upon *Japhet in Search of a Father* and *Jacob Faithful*. These four novels, which nobody discusses, are probably more widely read than any hundred of the controversial novels ; and it is comforting that it should be so, for there cannot be much wrong with the mental health of a generation that can appreciate Marryat. He wrote that which he knew ; his characters are men and women, not neurotic or erotic waxworks ; the events he describes are, for the most part, actual events in which he took part ; the scenes which he paints are not an author's imaginings, but a sailor's recollections. To these virtues add his style—if you like, his want of style,—his unaffected sincerity of narration, and you go far to account for the strong hold he has kept upon the healthy readers of two generations. He was the first and greatest English story-teller of the sea ; his fights and his storms are un-

surpassed in their vividness ; there is nothing of their kind in our literature to approach the club-hauling of the ship by Captain Savage out of the Bay of Arcachon, or the casting away of Easy and Gascoigne on the Sicilian coast. And there are many ambitious portrait-painters in fiction who might be proud to have drawn Chucks and Muddle, Mrs Easy and the nurse, Melchior and Timothy, Mrs Turnbull and Old Tom.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE DRAWING-ROOM

Five-and-twenty years ago, a member of the Savage Club wrote a book called *Philosophy in the Kitchen*, of which it was said that there was little philosophy in it, and less kitchen. If Lady Gordon, who has published a volume entitled *Unforegone Conclusions*, had remembered the old "Savage's" title, she might, without fearing the criticism that he provoked, have called her book *Philosophy in the Drawing-room*. She herself, however, might object that the opinions of a woman, even of a clear-eyed, witty Irishwoman, are not, and are not meant to be, philosophy, and that feminine ideals are no longer matured in the drawing-room. But whatever the title of the book had been, and whatever the purpose of its author, it must still have remained of piquant interest, especially to men readers, because we find in it some of the curious "salts" of modern English society resolved into their ultimate elements by the alchemy of a clever woman's mind. Preachers of a generation more serious than this used

to tell us about saintly folk who were "in the world, but not of the world." Now, Lady Gordon, wife of Sir Home Gordon, twelfth baronet, a cadet of the ducal house of Gordon, who traces his descent from Alexander Seton, first Earl of Huntly, who was Lieutenant-General of Scotland while the English were fighting the Wars of the Roses, is certainly "in Society." But she is not "of Society." Byron, in one of his letters, wrote : "I am only a spectator upon earth." Lady Gordon is not merely a spectator in Society, she plays her part in the drama as well ; but she is also a spectator, and the social philosophy she derives from her experience has a curious charm. It is fearlessly frank ; it is as free from illusion as the Binomial Theorem—perhaps one ought to say "freer than" instead of "as free as" ; on the surface it is often cynical ; it cuts into its subjects with the cold curiosity of a surgeon making an exploratory operation ; it measures everything—or everything except Irish things—by a standard of worldly wisdom ; and withal it is optimistic, indomitably optimistic through and through. Lady Gordon is no laudator of accomplished time ; it is useless to preach to her about degeneracy, decadency, and the decay of good manners ; she listens with untroubled brow, brushes aside all that is superficial and transitory in the changes of Society, and keeps her mind firmly fixed on that which is permanent. For her the tide of progress is always flowing ; in the shallows it may stir up sand and mud, its breakers may fling up the shingle with an echoing roar, the land breeze may blow back

the spume, but she never doubts that the tide is making.

Lady Gordon's philosophy is not perturbed by the young woman who complained that she had the "blooming hump." Very likely that girl will turn out as good a wife and mother as any of her ancestresses who divided their time between swoons and samplers. When a literary celebrity informed her that he was a "sensualist," and that "the morbid, the unsound, and the licentious were the only subjects in which he took any interest," the tranquil woman of the world weighed him up in the twinkling of an eye. She perceived that he was fond of "good big slabs of currant cake," that "he was really quite healthy—only very, very young." She bids us to remember that in all discussions on women the main point to be considered is that they do not really want to be understood. "We want to do things," she says, "but we never attempt them ; we don't want to be aggravating, but we apparently are ; we don't understand ourselves, and, what is more, we have no real desire to." Sometimes her glances wander beyond the narrow boundaries of Society. "There is nothing ennobling in being poor in England to-day. In other countries poverty may have compensations. In other times it may even have been endurable ; it is no longer anything but hateful and hideous, and, what is worse than either, stupid." And, again : "Nothing, not even great prosperity, can be more warping to the character than poverty." And in protest against the cant about wealth with which poor folk console themselves, she

well and truly asserts that "more fine characters have been ruined through poverty than have ever been spoiled by great riches." She dismisses the subject with the ironical reflection that "it is possible even to be horribly rich and yet happy." The "fancy religions" of Society provoke from her a faint smile—she can hardly repress a yawn. If pain is only an illusion of the mind, why don't Christian Science women stick their hatpins through their heads instead of through their hair? The hats would stick on so much firmer, especially as so many women nowadays wear wigs. "Why," she asks, "are we always looking for new roads to heaven?" and the answer comes: "It is not really new roads we look for to-day, but easier ones, broader ones, less bumpy, not so hard, so to speak, on the tyres of our moral motors." An unmoved spectator, Lady Gordon writes: "One thing alone is certain, and that is, that there will be no martyrs' bones on the modern road to heaven."

Lady Gordon is not amused by the foibles of her sex, neither does she deny them or resent them. They are facts to be considered. "We all thrive on admiration," she says, and "the periods of our lives which we look back upon with the greatest pleasure are those when we were being made love to." To apologise for such an important fact of human evolution—in the animal world it is the males who thrive on admiration—is the last thing that would occur to Lady Gordon. "The woman," she says, "who has never smiled on one man, sighed for another, kept one dangling, and

snubbed another may make an excellent maiden aunt, but she will be a hopeless failure as a wife." If one had to describe Lady Gordon's world in two words, one would call it a middle-aged world. All the emotions, the aspirations, the impulses, the mysteries, the illusions of youth have disappeared. It is a world of naked facts, and the denizens of it look upon them with a composure that is never broken. Here is an apophthegm belonging to this middle-aged world: "To be somewhat bored with your parents is not in the least incompatible with being very fond of them." In the mouth of a young person the maxim would sound horrible, and a young person who acted upon it would probably take the downward path, and would deserve to do so. But as a philosophical reflection of middle-age it cannot be dismissed offhand as a cynical fallacy. Englishmen, says Lady Gordon, care more about sport than they do about woman and her happiness. No epithet is more damning than "ladies' man," and none more enviable than "a good sportsman." "For sport is the price we pay for Empire, and almost all the bill has to be paid by women." A woman of the world, like Achilles, usually has a vulnerable spot in her panoply, and in Lady Gordon's case that spot is Ireland. When she writes of her native land her worldly philosophy fails her; the natural woman asserts herself, and her sentences throb with genuine passion. "It is a tragedy to be Irish." To the eye of the foreigner the Irish seem a cheerful and light-hearted nation. "As a matter of fact, we are not. Ireland is

the most unhappy nation in the world. In the heart of every Irish man and woman is a deep-seated sadness and black despair, the sadness and despair of Ireland reflected in her children." England without Ireland, she says, would long ago have gone to the wall. For all the greatest soldiers and sailors and administrators, all the cleverest men and most beautiful women in England, have been Irish. "We only made one mistake in the somewhat inglorious history of our nation, and that was when we allowed the English to conquer us instead of our conquering them." Let Lady Gordon console herself. It is said that the xanthochroic race always conquers the melanochoic race by arms, marries their women, and in the course of succeeding generations is absorbed by the vanquished, and disappears. It is quite possible that the Irish race may in this way absorb the English race, and survive them—and then, alas! await the advent of a new conqueror.

Section III

On the Highways

“Entering on a broad highway,
Where power and titles scattered lay,
He strove to pick up all he found.”

SWIFT.

THE BIBLE

THE volume of criticism upon the Bible is greater than that upon any other book, probably is as great as that upon all the other books in the world put together. Historically, philosophically, and linguistically, it is handled in our time with great freedom ; its statements are tested by human experience and assured knowledge ; many men, indeed, have found it possible to reject large portions of the Bible as historically unauthentic, without in any wise weakening their belief in its Divine inspiration. But everyone seems to have shrunk from treating it merely as a mine of quaint folk-lore and poesy. Yet it might well have tempted the gentle humour of Elia ; it might have kindled the soaring rhetoric of Macaulay ; it might have formed a channel for the dreary passion of Carlyle ; it might even now call forth some pages of pleasant "Birrelling." Textual criticism has done its worst and its best for the Bible ; literary criticism has done little or nothing for it. The greatness of the task, perhaps, has daunted those who have considered it. A critic who, pencil in hand, began to read through the Bible as an ordinary book, soon would be confounded by the immensity of his materials.

At the very beginning the pencil would begin to play ; surely it would come down at the words of Adam : " This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife ; and they shall be one flesh." So sang some unknown Hebrew poet at least four thousand years ago, and since then, in every age and in every tongue, poets and writers have been harping on the same theme ; and to one now, looking back, it seems as though the Hebrew had said almost everything that has since been said, and said it best of all.

A little farther on our critical reader would make a long pause. When he came to the story of Jacob and Joseph and Benjamin, he would reflect that here was an exposition of pure pathos unmatched in literature, save perhaps by one passage. The simple humanity of it all is overwhelming. The sob of the aged father : " If ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." The remorse of Judah : " Thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord ; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me ? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." The magnanimity of Joseph : " Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye

sold me hither ; for God did send me before you to preserve life. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." Familiarity with the Bible never breeds contempt, but it does sometimes breed indifference, and perhaps we fail to realise the literary greatness of this passage. Nothing can be compared with it except the story of the old man Priam bringing back the body of his son Hector. And it is delightful to contrast the methods of the two poets. The Greek is the greater artist. Already he has discovered a secret finally revealed to men by Wordsworth, and undreamed of by the Hebrew. He can hear the voice of Nature whispering in the ears of men. The chariot and the mule-car with the body came to the banks of Xanthus, and "Dawn of the saffron-mantle covered all the earth." What a wondrous line most wonderfully placed, a pause in the strenuous story at which men have marvelled all through the centuries ! It is as though the tumult and anguish of war had suddenly ceased, and the peace of God had begun to brood over the earth and to steal into stricken hearts. Yes, the Greek is by far the greater artist, but never could he have imagined the nobility of soul revealed by the words, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves." Once started on the track of comparative criticism, our supposed reader, with his fresh impressions, might spend a working lifetime upon the Bible. The translation of Elijah and the passing of Œdipus illustrate the points of resemblance and of difference between the

Hebrew and Greek minds. It can be felt in the brief descriptions which we have. "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." So departed the prophet ; and this is how the blind victim of Fate passed away :—

" neither was it thunderbolt from Zeus
With flashing fire that slew him, nor the blast
Of whirlwind sweeping o'er the sea that hour,
But either someone whom the gods had sent
To guide his steps, or else the abyss of earth
In friendly mood had opened wide its jaws
Without one pang."

But enough has been said to show how the Bible, as a story-book, reverently might be compared with other story-books, by capable persons, for our instruction and entertainment.

A purely literary criticism of the Bible might result in the discovery of an even wider and more valuable system of parallels than the coincidences of myth and mere poetic thought. Guided by it, we might see in the expressions wrung from men confronted by realities of life and death, of eternity and deity, a strange resemblance, independent of time and race, creed and theology. The especial reverence which the Christian faith bids us to attach to certain words and ideas makes it hard for us to realise that men of other religions may have attached an almost equal reverence to synony-

mous words and ideas. For example, when Homer speaks of Zeus as "Father of gods and men," we are repelled by a polytheistic implication which we do not feel when we celebrate the "God of Gods and Lord of Lords," when with by far the greater part of the Church we acknowledge the functions of saints and angels, or even when we confess the existence of a warring though subordinate power of evil. A purely literary study of the Bible, without abating our reverence and faith, might enable us better to appreciate the religious emotions expressed in pagan literature. To this end, let us in one or two passages from ancient authors translate "Zeus" and kindred words by "God," and we shall be struck by a majestic adoration which sometimes we are taught to consider purely Hebraic. In Homer we find: "God, most glorious and most great, shrouded in the storm-cloud, Dweller in the upper air." Listen to the Greek description of the jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children: "For even if God forthwith accomplish not His word, yet at last He will bring it to pass, and will exact a great atonement from them and their wives and their children." A gentler aspect of the Deity is revealed in the passage: "For He knoweth all things well, both the good things and the ill that are the lot of mortal men." This belief in the omniscience of God is found in many pagan authors. And again Sophocles writes: "Thou knowest all things though I be silent." The efficacy of prayer frequently is urged. Homer says: "It is a good thing to lift up hands to God, if haply He will

pity"; and Plato, who almost anticipates the most exquisite petition in the Church service, prays: "O God our King, grant to us those things that are good, whether we pray for them or not, and withhold those things that are harmful, even when we ask for them."

In the Book of Job the morning stars sang together; in Hesiod the Muses sang a song hardly less noble, and the dark earth resounded beneath them as they chaunted: "God reigneth in heaven, He wieldeth the thunder and the thunderbolt, and in His might hath He conquered." And again in the same poet we read: "Lord, Thy wisdom is excellent, and excellent is Thy knowledge." The exordium of the *Works and Days* may be rendered: "The weak He maketh strong, and the strong He bringeth low; He minisheth the great and increaseth the humble. God, whose voice is the thunder, whose dwellings are on high, He straighteneth the crooked and smiteth the proud of heart." The immortality of God is proclaimed by poets and philosophers. Says Menelaos in the *Odyssey*: "No mortal man may rival God, for His dwellings and His treasures are everlasting"; and Callimachus, in the *Hymn to Zeus*, exclaims: "Thou art not dead, O King, for Thou livest for ever," and he ends his psalm: "Hail, God most high, giver of good things, giver of safety! Who can sing Thy works? None hath there been, nor will be. Who can sing the works of God? Hail, Father, hail!" In Æschylus we find: "The mouth of God is not skilled to speak falsely, but He bringeth

all things to pass"; and in another place the Deity is described as "Guardian of the suppliant." Even the scoffer Euripides cries out: "O God, Thou guidest with justice all mortal affairs"; and Sophocles, filled with a sense of the omnipresence of the heavenly powers, asserts that they "behold the righteous and the wicked, nor has any evil man ever escaped their sight." The spirituality of the Almighty is suggested by Aristotle when he writes: "God being invisible to mortal eyes, is seen in His works." As the author of all good things He is recognised by Plato, who says: "God is good; and another is the cause of our sorrows; we must seek some other cause and not God." If time served, it would be possible to find in the ancient pagans many of the beautiful thoughts—especially the similes—which we associate with our own faith. Thus Marcus Aurelius speaks of life as "a warfare and a sojourning." Cicero declares that "Nature has given us an inn to tarry at, not an abode to dwell in." And Seneca, who perhaps more than any other of the philosophers abounds in distant echoes of Christian truths, writes—as quaint old Lodge translates him: "Whatsoever goods of this world thou beholdest about thee, look on them as if they were the baggage and moveables of an inn. We must pass further. Nature leaveth us as naked at the issue of this world as we were upon the entry; thou hast brought nothing with thee, neither shalt thou carry away anything with thee; nay, more, thou must leave in the world a great part of that which thou hast brought with thee." "As for man, his days are as

grass," sang the Psalmist ; and Homer, in a famous passage, has it : " As are the generations of leaves, so are those of men. The wind sheddeth the leaves on the ground, but the forest buddeth, and in the springtide putteth them forth anew. So are the generations of men ; one flourisheth and another passeth away." Finally, it is recorded of Anaxagoras, who lived five hundred years before Christ, that when one said to him, " Carest thou naught for thy fatherland ? " " Hush ! " he answered, pointing to heaven, " I care much for my fatherland."

SAPPHO

Among the strange things of life, that no man understandeth, literary fame must be included. Like the wind, its breath bloweth where it listeth, and its direction, strength, and persistence cannot be predicted. Some men strive after it and believe they have secured it, yet fail at last ; others, scarcely seeking it, receive it for an everlasting possession. A pathetic figure, for instance, was Southey, man of great heart and steadfast soul, who, conscious that his own generation thought lightly of him, laboured at his great tomes, serenely convinced that a great part of him must survive Libitina ; yet the very name of him is like to fade from the memory of the multitude before he has been dead a hundred years, and even now most of us know him only as the author of a " patterpiece " on the waterfall of Lodore and the biographer of Nelson. With him contrast " Glorious Sir Walter, Shakspeare's brother

brain," according to Mr William Watson, "Mere lettered fame esteeming not, Save as it ministered to weightier gain." How careless in the pursuit of reputation he was, and how zealous after pelf! and the Muse, chastening whom she loved, snatched the gold from his hands to make for him a crown of glory. The lordly profusion of Shakspeare was directed to the getting of a living, and the only evidence we have that his thoughts ever dwelt upon renown is the proud Horatian echo which predicts the permanence of his "powerful rhyme." But Shakspeare perhaps knew that he was immortal, and so had no concern about his fame. Others have felt the same lofty assurance, notably Horace and Euripides, and have been right; but some sardonic student might make a catalogue of the men of letters who have modestly confessed a consciousness of enduring greatness that has not saved them from oblivion. One of the most noteworthy illustrations of the strange chances of literary fame is afforded by the poetess Sappho, whose surviving fragments, together with all the best translations and adaptations in English, were collected a few years ago by Mr H. T. Wharton in a pretty vellum-covered duodecimo. Sappho lived two thousand five hundred years ago. The prophet Jeremiah was her contemporary; during her lifetime Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, Athens was receiving laws from Solon, and Rome had not emerged from her legendary period. During all this time she has been known as "The Poetess," in acknowledgment of her unchallenged supremacy. Poets

that were her contemporaries, or almost her contemporaries, coupled her name with the sweetest of epithets ; Plato numbered her among the wise ; the later writers of the Greek Anthology hailed her as the Tenth Muse, the Nursling of the Graces, the Pride of Hellas ; the poets of Rome translated her ; English Elizabethan bards experimented in the measure that bears her name, critics of England and Germany quarrelled over her, and the other day Mr Theodore Watts wrote : "Never before these songs were sung, and never since, did the human soul, in the grip of a fiery passion, utter a cry like hers ; and from the executive point of view, in directness, in lucidity, in that high imperious verbal economy which only nature can teach the artist, she has no equal, and none worthy to take the place of second."

Yet for at least half the period that has elapsed since Sappho lived the world has known none of her works save a few fragments quoted by grammarians and scholiasts to illustrate some point of syntax or of interpretation. We know about as much of her as we should know of Milton if all of him that remained to us were the passages set for parsing in Morrell's school grammar. We have one complete lyric, the ode to Aphrodite, quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in an essay on the structure of words, and four stanzas of the famous poem to a beloved woman, preserved by Longinus in his treatise on *The Sublime*. Of the remaining fragments the longest does not exceed half a dozen lines, and most of them are mere phrases and sometimes

single words. For the loss of "The Poetess" mankind has to thank the anti-pagan zeal of the early Church, which nearly succeeded in blotting out all the great literature of the ancient world. Scaliger says that the works of Sappho were burnt at Constantinople and at Rome in the eleventh century, in the Popedom of Gregory VII. It is almost certain, however, that her poems were destroyed hundreds of years earlier, because, as Bishop Blomfield points out, they are not annotated by any of the later grammarians, who assuredly would have used them had they been in existence. A more probable tradition attributes the burning to Saint Gregory Nazianzen in the fourth century. Petrus Alcyonius, a distinguished Venetian scholar of the sixteenth century, asserts that many of the works of the Greek poets were burned by order of the Byzantine Emperors, and that the poems of Gregory Nazianzen were circulated in their stead. In order to understand how much the world must have profited by this substitution, it is well to remember that Gregory Nazianzen is the man who wrote certain invectives against his school-fellow the Emperor Julian, in which he addresses that bloodthirsty and cowardly wretch, the Emperor Constantius II., as "most religious and Christ-loving of princes at the side of God," and suggests that if the Almighty can find a fault in him it will be his "inhuman humanity" in sparing the life of Julian when, aided by a bishop, he butchered the rest of his family. The sermons, the letters, the poems, even the last will and testament of this saintly personage have been

handed down to us by the loving care of the Church, and have been published in many editions ; but of Sappho "of the violet locks, pure and softly smiling," all that remains might be written on a couple of sheets of note-paper. There is, however, just a chance that the pious fury of the Byzantine Emperors may prove to be expended in vain. At last the all-preserving sands of Egypt are giving up their treasures, and among them may be found the lyrics of the Lesbian songstress whose unapproachable melodies are faintly echoed to us across the ages.

Little is known of Sappho herself. The island of Lesbos was her native place, she probably lived for about fifty years, and traditions agree that she was small of stature and of dark complexion. She was a learned maid, who gathered about her a circle of disciples and friends : Mr Wharton describes it as "a kind of æsthetic club devoted to the service of the Muses." A late author asserts that she married a wealthy man and bore him a daughter, but the passage, it is to be feared, is only an obscene pun. In the absence of positive knowledge a large amount of scandalous gossip has made her its victim. The comic writers, who hardly spared Homer himself, seem to have attributed insane and insatiable vices to her, until her very name and that of her people became odious. A tradition, commonly received, makes her to fall in love with a gentleman named Phaon—he, of course, has been explained away by the inevitable sun-myth theory—and to commit suicide because he rejected her.

Early in the last century, the age of moral disquisition, Friedrich Welcker, of Göttingen, undertook the task of vindicating the fair fame of Sappho, and expended vast erudition upon his work ; and a gallant English warrior, Colonel Mure, answering him, laboured to prove that she was a great deal worse than she ought to have been. No serious consequences followed ; Herr Welcker and Colonel Mure did not meet in deadly conflict, which shows that common-sense is growing in the world. About a hundred years earlier the scholars of Germany broached a theory that Ophelia committed suicide because she had been betrayed and deserted by Hamlet ; whereupon the English scholars sent over a challenge to Germany, offering to fight their Teutonic brethren to the last man until the virtue of the fair Ophelia was confessed. Of course all such discussions are a stupid waste of time, on a par with inquiries into the woes of Harriet Shelley and essays upon the darning of Carlyle's stockings. Whether or not Sappho's private life was regulated by high moral principles never can be known, and is not of the slightest importance in determining the greatness and the goodness of her poetical work. In that work, small in quantity though it is, there is abundant scope for literary inquiry. Is it certain that the Sapphic metre, as we understand it to have scanned, is so unsuitable to the spirit of English verse as it is supposed to be ? The following beautiful and perfect Sapphic stanza by Swinburne suggests that English poets might experiment with it profitably :—

“ All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron,
Stood and beheld me.”

The difficulty, of course, is that so few English poets have Swinburne's magical mastery of rhythm.

SENECA

To me it has always seemed that there was a strong resemblance between Seneca and Mr Gladstone, and this idea—whimsical idea if you like—is strengthened by M. Boissier's brilliant contrast between Tacitus and Seneca. Tacitus does not conceal his contempt for Seneca because that great statesman's performances sometimes fell short of his principles. But he makes no allowance for the terrible difficulty and danger which Nero's Prime Minister had to face. The five years during which the madman let him have his own way were the happiest period of the Roman Empire. When Nero grew tired of being a model prince, Seneca was no longer free to act as he would, and “he had to let much evil pass in order to have the power of doing a little good.”

It is not, however, the spectacle of a man of tender conscience, strong religious convictions, and lofty ideals forced by the sense of duty along the lower paths of opportunism that most suggests a resemblance between the Roman and the English Minister. Seneca and Mr Gladstone were probably the only two great Imperial

statesmen in the world's history who believed and taught that the obligations of humanity transcend the duties of citizenship. The ordinary Roman, like the Englishman, was brought up to think that he must be a citizen before everything else, that he must live for his country alone, and that time unconsecrated to her service is lost. But Seneca taught that before one is a citizen one is a man ; above the circumscribed State to which one belongs by birth there is a State more spacious, which is that of the whole world, humanity. Thus, then, man is divided, and bound to serve two countries. Cato, on the other hand, preached the Chamberlainite doctrine that because a man owes his existence to a particular State he should confine his allegiance to that State ; all who do otherwise he dubbed *otiosi*, idlers or "do-nothings." Seneca thought differently and dared to say so ; he maintains that we must needs serve the other State, the universal State, also, by endeavouring to be useful to men, and that nothing is more useful than to increase their knowledge, to console them in their miseries, to enlighten them in their doubts, to set them in their wanderings on the right path. The universal State which Seneca imagines contains all men without exception. Aliens and foes (the same thing to the Romans and to the followers of Mr Chamberlain) were not barred out ; slaves too were included. They are our brothers, and therefore we have duties to them ; "man, whosoever he be, must be sacred for man." Then the Prime Minister of Nero, like the Prime Minister of Victoria, was an indomitable optimist.

Tacitus and his friends held as a maxim that all was better in former days, and that men only change for the worse ; they ever praised the old order, which, at the same time, they admitted could not possibly be restored. But Seneca believed in progress, he had confidence in man, he affirmed that humanity is ever advancing to perfection, and instead of turning piously in the direction of the past, he looked forward to the future. "The true Roman," says M. Boissier, "knows naught of Seneca's distinctions between the man and the citizen. His State claims him in entirety ; he owes himself wholly to her service. Thus Tacitus returns to the somewhat narrow and jealous conception which the old Romans formed of patriotism."

The true Englishman, let me add, understands as little as the true Roman the philosophy of Seneca. He can easily comprehend the Birmingham Messiah when he preaches the gospel of hitting the foreigner, but he gapes with astonishment when Seneca declares that it is better to be a good man than a successful man. Seneca, moreover, was, like Mr Gladstone, a man of subtle mind, especially in religious matters. He argued, for instance, that nothing is bad in itself—a hard saying for a subject of Nero. He professed himself to be one of those incomplete philosophers who are cured of their vices but not of their passions, and the common people, observing some of the positions into which his opportunist policy forced him, wondered if he would have done much worse if he had not been cured of his vices. The Christian Church has always been half disposed

to claim Seneca as a secret convert. He certainly was never a Christian, but it is more than likely that a student so avid of knowledge would seek to know something about the new religion. That in Seneca's eclectic stoicism there was a strain of tenderness like that which flows from Christian faith was probably due to his emotional temperament. Though he had the iron nerve to control a bloodthirsty maniac for many years, he was at heart a sentimental person. This quality constantly crops up in his letters, and it is also seen in his relations with his wife, a subject which, we may be sure, in his case called forth doubt and derision from the vulgar herd, as it did in the case of the British statesman. In his sadness he is alone; he lacks both the stony serenity of the stoic and the cheerful hope of the Christian. The mutability of things is always present to his imagination; everything is as the furniture of an inn. We must go further; we may not take anything with us we did not bring, and of what we did bring we must leave behind a great part. Yet the day which seems to us our last is but the birthday of eternity, and the darkness shall flee away, and the heavenly light shall appear to us when we look upon it in its own place. God looketh upon all things, and if we approve ourselves in His sight, no hosts shall terrify us, no trumpets shall alarm, no threats shall disturb. Such sentences as these have almost persuaded men that Seneca was a Christian.

JULIUS CÆSAR

In human affairs "jesting Pilate's" problem perpetually crops up, and often it happens that the wiser a man grows, and the more he profits by thought and by experience, the less willing he is to give a ready answer to the question, "What is truth?" There are moods and there are circumstances in which one is tempted to seek refuge from doubt in the mists of metaphysics. Truth, after all, is a mental conception, not an external entity, and we have no means of determining what correspondence there is, or whether there is any at all, between our subjective states and objective reality. When we say that a proposition is true, it is possible that we express merely a state of mind absolutely unrelated to any external and concrete fact; and hence it may follow that the acceptance of belief with a view to influence mind and character is more rational than the limitation of belief to a supposed but undemonstrable correspondence with objective reality. For instance, if, when we say we believe or disbelieve in the occurrence of certain events a couple of thousand years ago, we reveal a mental state with which external fact has no causal connection, the only determining consideration between belief and disbelief should be the influence likely to be exercised upon ourselves. The factor of personal judgment and temperament is of such extreme importance in the attempted solution of most historical problems, the aspect of men and things and doings varies so widely

with the eyes through which they are viewed, that the puzzled student may be forgiven if he comes to the conclusion that there's nothing true or false but thinking makes it so. Take, for example, the conflicting views of two Regius Professors of History upon the character and work of Julius Cæsar—those of Sir J. R. Seeley and those of Mr Froude. Each writer had the same materials before him, and yet the features of Seeley's Cæsar differ as widely from those of Froude's as do the features of a Hottentot from those of the Apollo Belvedere. The former was nothing but a successful soldier; his party were actuated by no principle whatever "except a military devotion to their leader." He himself owed his success to nothing but "the admirable efficiency of his army, and to his admirable use of it." His policy, or rather his actions—for he had no policy—produced far-reaching results; but those results he never foresaw. "The Cæsarians were a party without ideas." The Jacobins used to think of Cæsar as a great aristocrat patriotically assassinated by Brutus. A later generation of critics has described him as the destroyer of aristocratic privilege and exclusiveness. To Seeley he is neither one nor the other; his revolution was "a triumph of military organisation," "it was the war-power that triumphed in him." He gave to his country two centuries of peaceful government, "but the supremacy which he gave to military force in the moment when he ordered the passage of the Rubicon led to the frightful military anarchy of the third century,

and ultimately to the establishment of Oriental Sultanism in Europe."

From this cold and unfruitful estimate, which repels the sympathies and leaves frigid the imagination, let us turn to the glowing judgment of Froude, a judgment, let us remember, which reposes upon precisely the same materials. Froude's Cæsar was a glorious instrument of Divine Providence, sent into the world at a special time to achieve a special object. Old faiths and old sanctions were dead, and "there remained of spiritual conviction only the common and human sense of justice and morality." A new life was about to dawn for mankind. "But the life which is to endure grows slowly, and as the soil must be prepared before the wheat can be sown, so, before the kingdom of heaven could throw up its shoots, there was needed a kingdom of this world where the nations were neither torn in pieces by violence nor were rushing after false ideals and spurious ambitions. Such a kingdom was the empire of the Cæsars, a kingdom where peaceful men could work, think, and speak as they pleased, and travel freely among provinces ruled for the most part by Gallios, who protected life and property and forbade fanatics to tear each other in pieces for their religious opinions. Had Europe and Asia been covered with independent nations, each with a local religion represented in its ruling powers, Christianity must have been stifled in its cradle. If St Paul had escaped the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, he would have been torn to pieces by the silversmiths at Ephesus. The appeal

to Cæsar's judgment-seat was the shield of his mission, and alone made possible his success." This transformation of the conqueror of Gaul into an earlier John the Baptist created several interesting dilemmas for the ingenious Mr Froude. For instance, it compelled him to raise the personal character of the great Roman to the height of Christian standards. Now, it is tolerably certain that Julius had a child by Cleopatra ; he himself, at any rate, seems to have believed it, for he named the boy after himself ; and in his youth, if one may believe his contemporaries and the affectionate and admiring ditties of his soldiery, his amours were extensive and peculiar. But it would never do to have an imperial forerunner of true religion with such a character ; and so Mr Froude flounders about among his facts and his theories until he presents us with an emasculate Joseph, slightly more disagreeable than the subject of Catullus's epigram.

It is possible enough that Julius Cæsar was, as Seeley suggests, a Roman Cœur de Lion, thick of head and strong of arm ; equally possible is it that he was, as Froude implies, of the type of John the Baptist. But in either case the truth is unprofitable, and it were wise to cast away these historians and to turn to Shakspeare, or perhaps to Mommsen, whose picture of the hero is as inspiring as the dramatist's. Of what possible value are unprovable theories, since even now, when the story of the Roman Commonwealth lies complete before us, we cannot determine the wisdom or the folly of the man's policy, and only can judge him, as we judge our

contemporaries, by a personal opinion of his resourcefulness in fulfilling the needs of the moment? What really he was, if he was anything, we cannot know, but we can help and strengthen our own natures by the contemplation of a great-hearted gentleman, finding work to do in the world, and doing it with courage, with urbanity, with magnanimity. Let us watch him as he drops unread into the fire the secret papers of his enemies, captured at Pharsalus and Thapsus; as he pardons and protects the great, ignoble Cicero, traitor in turn to every party; as he scorns to strike the smaller schemers, Cassius, Brutus, Ligarius, Labienus, and many more, who fare upon his bounty and plot his destruction; as he pushes away the proffered crown, proclaiming that the Romans have no king save God; as in the last hour, with the shadow of death on his face and the bitterness of death in his heart, he walks up to the Senate House, calm, brave, dutiful. Rejoicing in such fair visions, we can join with Mommsen in the cry, "Behold the perfect man!" and assuredly it will be good for us to meet, as face to face and in constant friendship, "the only one among the mighty men of the earth who in great matters and little never acted according to inclination or caprice, but always without exception according to his duty as ruler, and who, when he looked back on his life, found doubtless erroneous calculations to deplore, but no false step of passion to regret." Such exercise will be as profitable as the fatuous hoarding of facts, when every fact which seems to us as hard as adamant

in truth may be but of the stuff that dreams are made of.

I have been drawn to the subject of Cæsar by the appearance of Dr Rice Holmes's spirited translation of the first seven books of Cæsar's *Commentaries*, a work into which one supposed that every schoolboy had penetrated at least as far as the first sentence. In this supposition it appears, however, that I was mistaken, for Dr Holmes tells us that neither the Gallic nor the Civil War is set as a Latin book in the entrance examinations to Sandhurst and Woolwich. Truly we are a wonderful people; we expect our budding soldiers "to criticise the chief elegiac poets, to give accounts of the lives and writings of Pacuvius, Martial, Lucilius, Cato, and Silius Italicus," but we do not demand from them the slightest knowledge of the military commentaries of the soldier who founded the Roman Empire. And nowadays, when the old ladies who control the education of our youth find a rudimentary knowledge of Latin to be too much for the addle-pates of their darlings, it is doubtful whether the schoolboy is aware of so much as that all Gaul is divided into three parts. To the interesting mortals, then, who have found the acquisition of Cæsar's language to be too severe a strain on the faculties Dr Holmes's version may be commended. They may not be able to read Latin, but they may be able to enjoy an intensely interesting book, more fascinating than any novel that has been written since Walter Scott died. The *Commentaries* should be especially attractive to Englishmen, because they

attempt to tell in detail the story of man's life in our island from the earliest times. But the historical charm of the book is its least charm ; it is most delightful in its revelation of the character of the noble man who wrote it. Was there ever another book so perfect in its restraint and impersonality ? Cæsar tells us of himself and of his own great deeds as impartially—one might almost say as casually—as an unconcerned spectator might describe a street scene. He speaks of himself in the third person and tells us that Cæsar did this or Cæsar said that, or Cæsar thought the other thing, with an air of almost divine detachment, and like a passionless god he deals out justice to himself and his subordinates and his enemies.

In his account of the disaster at Aduatuca there is not a trace of personal resentment against the fool Sabinus, or the brave but inept Cotta, who lost a legion and five cohorts for him ; and in Cæsar's view the greatest crime a soldier can commit is to throw away the lives of his men. At the siege of Avaricum, one of the crises of his career, he wrote : " The legionaries, indignant that the enemy behind that paltry barrier had the hardihood to look them in the face, clamoured for the signal for action, but Cæsar made them understand that victory could only be gained at a heavy cost, and by the sacrifice of many brave men ; he could see that for his honour their hearts were steeled to face any peril, and for that reason he should deserve to be called the most heartless of men, if he did not hold their lives dearer than his own reputation. In this way he soothed

the men's feelings, and, leading them back the same day to camp, proceeded to complete his arrangements for the siege of the town." It is difficult to imagine any other great captain in history preferring to his own fame the welfare of his soldiers. The second disaster at Aduatuca was caused by Quintus Cicero, who, in disobedience to Cæsar's order, allowed his legionaries to leave the entrenchment to forage. Cæsar by his arrival saved the situation, and all he said was : "Cæsar was well aware that in war it is the unexpected that happens. On his return, therefore, he made no complaint except that the cohorts had been allowed to leave their proper place in the garrison, remarking that no opening should have been left for the slightest accident." No wonder that his troops adored him, and that even in the moment of his one defeat at Gergovia, his lieutenant, Labienus, sent the legions to a desperate encounter, bidding them "imagine that Cæsar was present in person." There is, so far as I am aware, only one little touch of human weakness in all the book, and that is where, at the final overthrow of Vercingetorix, he tells us that "the enemy knew that he (Cæsar) was coming from the colour of his cloak, which he generally wore in action to mark his identity." There are British generals who would have telegraphed such a fact to the halfpenny press, and one would have received the announcement as a matter of course. But the world would be shocked if Lord Kitchener did such a thing. And one would have been better pleased if Cæsar had left the little matter of the distinguishing cloak unrecorded.

SOCRATES

There are signs that the effects of modern education are not all bad. For example, how are we to explain the appearance of a series of Greek and Latin classics, with the text on one page and a translation opposite, in pretty volumes costing but a trifle each? They must be published because there is popular demand for them and because it pays. And yet forty years ago no publisher out of Bedlam would have ventured to produce Plato and Euripides for popular consumption. A change has taken place, and the credit of it belongs to our modern system of education, and the witness of it is the "Temple Greek and Latin Classics," whose existence is a proof that the halfpenny paper and the sporting tipster are not yet all-sufficient to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the British people. The second volume of the series contains the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito* of Plato, with an introduction, translation, and notes by Miss F. M. Stawell, sometime lecturer in classics at Newnham. The introduction to the book contains the short passage from the *Phædo* in which the hour of death of Socrates is described; so that there is in this little volume a complete account of the offence, the trial, and the martyrdom of the Greek prophet, who, if to his divine gifts there had been added the constructive imagination and the consuming passion of the Semites, might have anticipated by four hundred years the work of St Paul. God has spoken to men through the mouths of many

teachers, but few of them have been better, purer, or greater than Socrates, who laid down his life for the truth and sealed his testimony with his blood ; and now, far down the ages, Englishmen may read with reverence the noblest of all his words, recorded by his faithful disciple, and chosen and translated for their use and benefit by Miss Stawell.

This clever lady's English version, based on the text of the Cambridge University Press, is a close translation by a person familiar with the best results of modern scholarship. It is pleasant to read—much more pleasant than Jowett's—for Socrates is made to talk in English like an Englishman, not like a Greek translating out of his own into a foreign tongue. This method, however, has at least one defect. In Greek, as in French, it is possible to combine great dignity and solemnity of style and expression with colloquial ease and rapidity. In English, on the other hand, this is not now possible. The literary influence of two or three great seventeenth-century books, such as the Bible, Shakspeare, and Milton, has been so overwhelming that a separate dialect has been reserved for the expression of our highest emotions. Such influences affected the Greeks but little, and the French not at all ; roughly speaking, they made the polite speech of each generation supply all its literary and emotional requirements. Translators who strive to create an English "atmosphere" sometimes forget this fact. When Miss Stawell makes Socrates frequently say in the *Apology*, "My good fellow," "My worthy man," and "See here, my friend," she does, indeed,

convey some sense of the ease of his fluent Attic ; but there is a want of dignity in the English words, and there are associations which are foreign to the Greek originals, and which would have been intolerable alike to Athenian orators and Athenian auditors. The general reader will best understand this point when he is told that Miss Stawell often renders by "Gentlemen" the words with which St Paul began his speech on Mars Hill, which the Authorised Version translates, "Ye men of Athens." "Wiser than me," a colloquialism which occurs more than once in Miss Stawell's *Apology*, jars in such a solemn relationship, though, of course, Miss Stawell can quote good authorities such as Swift and Prior in her defence, and the similar case of Shakspeare's Cleopatra, who asks, "Is she as tall as me?"

Such little blemishes, however, do not detract from the value of the book to English readers. It will pass into the hands of thousands of persons to whom the Greek text on the left-hand pages will be unintelligible, and who will gain from Miss Stawell's English on the right-hand pages knowledge of a martyrdom which, save one, was the most momentous in the history of the human race. From it they will discover that faith in God, hope of salvation, a love of virtue and holiness which is stronger than death, and the desire to help and to elevate the children of men do not belong to any one generation or race, church or religion. They will see how the sense of duty and the fear of God, in one whom they have been taught to regard

as a "pagan," transcended all fear of pain and death. Socrates might have secured acquittal if he had appealed to the mercy of his judges or admitted that he deserved punishment. This his conscience forbade him to do. "Were I to win you over by my entreaties," he said, "and have you do violence to your oath, plainly I should be teaching you not to believe in the Gods, and my own speech would accuse me unmistakably of unbelief. But it is far from being so. For I believe, men of Athens, as not one of my accusers believes, and I leave it to you and to God to decide my case as may be best for me and you." This beautiful anticipation of the prayer of St Chrysostom was the last thing spoken by Socrates before the verdict of Guilty. Even then he might have escaped had he humbled himself before the court, but with the irony of a great gentleman, as well as the tenacity of a martyr, he refused. The sentence of death was pronounced, followed by a scene of moving majesty upon the like of which few eyes have ever rested. The judges were five hundred and one, and behind them, out into the evening sunlight which cast long shadows, stretched a throng of citizens. The hum of departure was heard, and the judges rose from their seats, the prosecutors jubilantly departed, and the spectators began to turn away. Then Socrates stood up and begged such as cared to hear him to stay a little while. Beside him were his weeping disciples, before him judges who had doomed him and judges who had supported his cause, and there were groups of Athenians curious to hear for the last time the voice of

the teacher whose lessons had power so great that the State dared not let him live. He came forward and spoke those simple "last words" which have been strength and comfort to countless thousands in the day of temptation and in the hour of death. To read them as he spoke them—for, in spite of the scholars, I believe he did speak them; surely they are the cry of a human heart, not a literary fabrication of Plato—is a sufficient reward for the toil of learning a difficult language; but there is a greater reward, and he who studies them with reverence "must think of death with hope, and remember this, at least, as true, that no evil can come to a good man in life or death, and that he is not forgotten of God."

CICERO

About few men has so much been written as about Cicero. His praise is in the mouths of poets and philosophers; politicians have made studies of him, orators have derived rules from him, grammarians have constituted him a final authority. Of old it was said that a man must be either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, and in this country a few years ago we were divided into Tennysonian and Browningites, and the members of the one school seemed to lose the power of appreciating the merits of the other. In much the same way, poets, philosophers, and historians have attached themselves either to Cicero or to Cæsar: perhaps it would be more correct to say that they have attached them-

selves to Cicero, for very few of them have owned allegiance to Cæsar. Mommsen stands almost alone in his devotion to the great warrior-statesman, and he, it is amusing to notice, does scant justice to the hero of the Nones of December. The German historian dubs Cicero "a dabbler abounding in words, poor beyond all conception in ideas, nothing but an advocate, and not a good one." Assuredly this is a most grotesque judgment, for no human being ever possessed more ideas than Cicero. He has suffered, however, from intemperate eulogy more than from hostile prejudice, and this is perhaps due to the facts, firstly, that poets and historians generally have belonged to the class of whose interests he was the strongest pillar, and, secondly, that the world has been contented to take him at his own valuation.

Many distinguished men have misunderstood their own greatness, and Cicero was one of these. Accidents as well as his abilities helped to place him in a position of authority, and he persisted in regarding himself as a statesman and a man of action, while in reality he was a thinker and a man of letters, who, all unconsciously, was made the tool first of one party, then of another. In his early days, the Roman constitution "had the theory of a popular sovereignty without any machinery for realising that sovereignty in fact." It was a narrow oligarchy, that had been effective enough while Rome was a city-state, but was incapable of holding together a conquered world. It was a government without either an intelligent will to direct it or a strong arm to

defend it. Already it had received serious shocks ; the *coup d'état* of Tiberius Gracchus had loosened its foundations ; the revolution of Marius for a while had overthrown it ; only by the military power and the ghastly massacres of Sulla had it been restored. The small body of nobles that exercised all the real executive authority had conceded many political reforms, the more readily, perhaps, because they themselves were unaffected by them. The Volscian people, for example, from whom Cicero sprang, obtained what at the present time is called home rule—in other words, Roman citizenship in addition to the power of managing their local affairs—about a hundred years before he was born. It was only when social reform impended that the real fight began. The old constitution was a fine instrument for the defeat of reformers. Laws propounded by the consuls were carried by a handful of citizens assembled in the Roman Forum, and gangs of hired ruffians always could secure the absence of undesirable persons. If one consul went a little too fast, his colleague could block legislation by reporting unfavourable omens. Thus, when Cæsar proposed his agrarian and financial measures, Bibulus insisted that he saw lightning ; and, according to law and custom, the consideration of the bills should have been adjourned. But Cæsar was not the man to allow even lightning to turn him from his path, and he carried the measures in spite of the omen. Even Cicero, when faced with the necessity of punishing the Catilinarian conspirators, violated the constitution, and Lentulus and his associates

were executed by a tribunal as unconstitutional as that which sent Charles I. to the block. Two influences increased the weakness of the Senate. Their power, since the establishment of standing armies, rested ultimately upon the goodwill of the most successful generals, and their feebly selfish policy constantly was frustrated by the manœuvres of the equestrian order. This order, to which Cicero belonged, was analogous to our upper middle class. It contained the wealthy business men of Rome, the merchants, bankers, and tax-farmers. These astute persons, like Hal of the Wynd, fought for their own hands. To gain their privileges they sided with the democracy, and when the democracy grew threatening they went over to the nobles. Among their rights was that of constituting the juries which tried administrators charged with corruption. The subordinate political offices were open to them, and from such officials the Senate was recruited. But the nobles jealously excluded them from the highest places, and when Cicero became consul no knight had occupied the office for about two hundred years.

Cicero, like Mr Chamberlain, began life as a Radical. The dictator Sulla had clipped the wings of the knights, who were then great friends of the democracy. In defending a man who had been robbed by a creature of Sulla, Cicero made his first public appearance. It was a brave performance, but probably the orator ran less risk than he would have us to believe—certainly less than Cæsar when he refused to divorce his wife at the bidding of the tyrant. However, it established his

fame, and the nobles were quick enough to perceive his abilities. Perhaps, upon the principle that induces directors to give a seat at their board to troublesome critics, a place was found for him in the Senate, and he was elected consul. In that office he showed himself to be a fearless and capable administrator ; but his success turned his head. From that moment he regarded himself as the hub of the universe, whereas he was only a rather large fly upon the wheel. His overthrow of the Catilinarian conspiracy completed his demoralisation. It was in truth a pitiful business that Cæsar would have nipped in the bud, scorning to do more than to hint to the conspirators that they were a pack of blundering fools. Cicero, who must have had half of them in his pay, and was informed of every step they took, carefully nursed the plot until he could explode it in a blaze of theatrical glory. Henceforth he posed as the saviour of the State, and paved the way for his sad humiliation. Always excepting his power of oratory, he lacked every one of the qualities of a successful ruler at a critical time. He had no sure instinct in the choice of instruments and allies ; his friend Cato was an obstinate theorist that would have overturned a dozen constitutions to establish a single principle ; his patron Pompey, along with all Cicero's vanity, exhibited an incompetence almost miraculous. He had no steadfastness ; in the days of his disgrace he crawled backwards and forwards between the feet of Cæsar and Pompey, pouring over each in turn his fickle praises. He wanted proud magnanimity ; never, like

Cæsar, could he have tossed unread into the fire the secret papers of his foes. Worst of all, he had no true political foresight; he could not perceive that for a state with an unworkable constitution, with a stupid and idle nobility, a selfish and shifty plutocracy, an ignorant and reckless democracy, the only possible alternative was national dissolution, or Cæsar. The liberty, the order, the stability of which he dreamed came only in the train of him whom Mommsen well has called “the entire and perfect man.” The author of the essay on Old Age ever must remain one of the most brilliant and most lovable of men. But of Cicero, the politician glorified by himself and magnified by a host of adorers, one had best be contented to say, in the sardonic words of Seneca, that he was “non sine causa sed sine fine laudatus.”

“DE SENECTUTE”

Old age, like death, is a subject from which the young and healthy mind intuitively shrinks. All men wish to attain it, and all dread it as it is approached. Its contemplation is man’s saddest occupation. Even in youth and middle life it casts its cold shadow across a man’s heart, for he watches its blight falling upon the elders whom he has loved, and upon whom he has leaned. This, possibly, is a grief harder to bear than actual personal experience of old age, which creeps on so imperceptibly that nature has ample time to accommodate herself to new conditions. In poverty or ill-health no

age of man can be happy ; and it needs not Cicero to convince us that, with a sound constitution and reasonable comfort, a man may be as happy, after his fashion, in his latter years as he was in his midsummer prime. Nevertheless, the wonderful essay *De Senectute* is not without its uses. It is those who may yet grow old that need consolation. The wise old man has found his consolation long ago. In the essay Cato addresses his arguments to two young men to prove that old age is not less happy than earlier life ; they it is who need convincing, not he. And in all literature there is perhaps no balm more sweet for minds hurt by the fear of age. In Holy Writ we are taught to expect the happiness of another life rather than earthly compensations. Austere are the words of the great Psalm : “The days of our years are threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” Not less stern is the exquisite chapter of Ecclesiastes wherein man is bidden to remember his Creator “while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them,” when “the almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail.” Such references to old age as are made in the New Testament have the purpose of leading young persons to pay due respect to their elders. In fact, throughout the Bible old age is regarded as one of the inevitable woes of human life.

The Greeks, before Socrates, for the most part

held old age in shuddering horror. In Homer the weakness of advanced years is often touched upon with a half-scornful pity. Achilles, addressing Nestor, says : “ Now give I thee this prize unwon, for not in boxing shalt thou strive, neither wrestle, nor enter on the javelin match, nor race with thy feet ; for grim old age already weigheth on thee.” Nestor, replying, “ recounts the triumphs of his youth, and sadly says : Thus was I once, but now let younger men join in such feats. I must bend to grievous age ; but then was I of mark among heroes.” Cicero points out, however, the passage in which Agamemnon wishes for ten men like Nestor, quaintly observing that the King of Men nowhere wishes for ten men like Ajax. The Greek tragedians are usually gloomy on the subject. There is a famous passage in *Æschylus* which represents advanced age tottering along “ its three-footed path ” nothing better than a child, and flitting like a daydream. Euripides says scornfully that the race of old men is by nature hasty and impatient of control. To him they are but children once more. Gloomiest of all is that tremendous anti-strophe of *Sophocles*, the end of which has been rendered :—

“ Age, impotent, accurst,
That friendless, homeless blight,
Last of man’s woes and worst,
Where all the rest unite.”

The comedians and comic poets have a brighter outlook. Anaxandrides contends that old age is not the

heaviest of burdens, and that the man who bears it unwisely makes it so. He who endures it without grumbling lulls it to sleep, takes away its pain, and substitutes pleasure. Aristophanes lightly remarks that old men are boys twice over. And one unknown comic poet compares old age to marriage, saying we are all in a hurry to obtain them both, and when we have got them we are sorry.

Generally the Latin poets and writers follow Greek originals. Virgil, as everybody knows, puts sorrowing age among the shapes of horror that have placed their couches in the jaws of hell. Most of the Roman poets linger with dreary fascination upon its physical blemishes. Catullus sings of its loitering step and trembling knee and palsied head. Juvenal, as we should expect, appals us with ugly detail. "With what unceasing and grievous ills is old age loaded? First of all a face hideous and ghastly, changed from its former self; for a smooth skin, a hide with scruff overgrown, and flabby cheeks and such wrinkles as many a grandam ape is seen to scrape in her wizened jowl." The tenderer Ovid laments that "wasting old age will place its hand on beauty, advancing with noiseless step." Even Seneca, that sweetest, most comforting philosopher, regards age as an incurable disease, and sighs to think that "none of us is the same in old age that he was in youth." But why multiply these mournful moans? Let us turn rather to the sunny sentences of Cicero, who bids every man not only to hope for old age, but to rejoice in it when he has

reached it. His own life was sad and disappointed when he wrote it. His power had passed from him, his ideals were shattered, his hopes were blighted, and yet he, a pagan philosopher, was inspired to utter a jubilant shout of triumphant faith which neither confessor nor martyr has surpassed. It is not necessary to analyse an argument familiar to all educated persons. I only desire to note that, of the four points of his thesis, his conclusion ultimately rests upon the last. He contends that old age does not prevent useful activity ; that the loss of physical strength is not an unmixed evil ; that the fading of sensual pleasures is a splendid advantage. But all these things he believes because, in the fourth place, he has the conviction in the inmost core of his reason that old age is but the last stage of a journey to a glorious immortality. The positive and passionate certitude of Cicero is one of the most wonderful facts in the history of religion. It far transcends the calm philosophy of Socrates, who was equally contented to live or be dead beyond the grave. To Cicero the death of the soul is unthinkable, and he is joyfully ready to quit life as he would an inn, not as a home. The great Apostle himself has no confession of faith more resolute than that passage of jubilant acclaim which begins : “O præclarum diem quum ad illud divinum animorum concilium coetumque proficiscar, quumque ex hac turba et colluvione discedam.” He is going to join those who have gone before him, and especially his dear son, for whose loss he found “consolation in the thought that the parting and

separation between us was not to be for long." Not truth itself can destroy his faith, and he writes that final confession upon which a Church might be founded : " If I err in this, that I believe the souls of men to be immortal, I err gladly, and I would not while I live that this error in which I glory should be wrested from me."

VIRGIL

When Abraham pled with Jehovah for the cities of the plain there were not found ten righteous persons to stay the hand of the Destroyer. In our modern world of gross materialism, of Brummagem virtues, where the making of a machine is a nobler work than the making of a soul, there is peradventure a remnant left of just men for whose sake the avenging angel may forbear. A passage of simple but poignant pathos in Professor Glover's *Studies in Virgil* shows that some of these are to be found in Canada. When that author was Professor of Latin in a Canadian university, Greek and Latin were optional subjects, and the young men of practical minds naturally chose courses which, in a common phrase that hides a fathomless depth of irony, "were likely to be of future advantage to them." What these subjects were we are not told ; possibly the students flocked to the professor of wheat-growing, the professor of log-sawing, the professor of paper-making, or the professor of brewing. But the occupant of the Latin chair was not without consolation. "Not at all infrequently," he says, "a student, in

spite of woeful preparation and persistent inability to translate with accuracy, or to compose without elementary blunders in syntax, would nevertheless realise something of the literary value of the poet or historian who was being read in class, and would persevere with an almost pathetic enthusiasm in a study in which he could hope for no distinction, but which he could and did enjoy. He realised, in fact, that the old Scotch term Humanity meant something." One likes to think that in Canada, amid the boundless autumn fields of grain and in the white solitudes of winter, there are some happy souls that take delight in the hardly won treasures of Virgil. If there are, it is a good thing for Canada. The inspiring effect of such scholars upon the teacher is manifested in Professor Glover's charming book, which embodies and expands the winter lectures of five years, and is touched with the glow of "almost pathetic enthusiasm" that brightened the lives of those young folk who "without hope of distinction" devoted themselves to the study of the poet. Mr Glover's chapters may serve to draw others in this country within the witchery of "sweet Maro's matchless strain," and those who have already felt it will love it the more and understand it the better for what he says.

Virgil's hold upon the minds of men is one of the most interesting facts of literature; and one suspects that his influence, in part at any rate, is the result of a curious accident. Until the abolition of the Humanities and the substitution of practical money-

getting as the supreme and sublime object of existence, the words of Virgil rose to the lips of the best-educated men perhaps more frequently than those of any other book except the Bible. And one reason is that, by a strange chance, Virgil himself in the Middle Ages came to be regarded as almost a sacred writer, and the reverence he so won is even still unconsciously accorded to him. The mediæval Church claimed him as half her own. Even those who denied to him the full gift of inspiration, like Dante placed him on the threshold of the saints; his own contemporary Horace, it is interesting to note in passing, classed him among the "white souls," along with Varius and Plotius. But the Church of the Middle Ages went further, and imagined that Virgil was not far from the kingdom of God. Comparetti says that in the Mass of St Paul, which used to be sung at Mantua, it was declared that the Apostle visited the poet's grave at Naples and burst into tears, exclaiming: "What would I not have made thee had I found thee still alive, O greatest of the poets!" Thus it came about that Virgil, next after the Bible, was most familiar in the mouths of men.

In this connection one calls to mind a passage of Froude, in which he compares Homer with David, and continues: "When the occasions of life stir the feelings in us on which religion itself reposes, if we were as familiar with the *Iliad* as with the Psalms, the words of the old Ionian singer would leap as naturally to our lips as those of the Israelite king." This is most true and useful to remember; we must beware

of supposing that thoughts and expressions which for us have hallowed associations are necessarily of the greatest artistic and moral excellence. Christendom has accorded to Virgil a recognition denied to all other pagan poets ; theologians have discussed whether the famous “*jam nova progenies*” was or was not an inspired prophecy of the birth of Christ, and the figure of the Mantuan has been represented in Christian churches among the patriarchs and prophets. But it does not follow that either his ethics or his art surpasses that of all other classical poets.

Virgil is the most human of the ancient singers ; he was a man of like passions with ourselves ; in his verses “*sunt lacrymæ rerum*” such as are not to be found in any other poems, Greek or Roman. Mr Glover, by the way, points out with quaint truth that nobody knows exactly what Virgil meant by that deathless phrase. But the intimacy of his association with the life he sang, and the sensitiveness with which he vibrated to the emotions he himself created, were limitations that kept him below the highest peaks of perfection. He was an actor playing on his own stage in his own piece, rarely able to see beyond the footlights. He knows nothing of the divine detachment of Homer and Shakspeare, who looked down upon the whole earth and beheld with serene, untroubled eyes the sorrow and the joy of men. To contrast him with the multitudinous Shakspeare, the heir of many succeeding ages, were difficult and perhaps absurd, so men usually have been content to judge him by his own master and model. But here

again a difficulty arises, for one sometimes doubts whether the true Virgil was not the Virgil of the *Eclogues* rather than the Virgil of the *Æneid*. Here he has no master and no pupil ; for pure felicity and poetic tenderness you cannot match, in Greek or Roman literature, that picture of the girl beneath the apple-tree which Macaulay and Voltaire praised as the most perfect in the Latin language. Virgil, however, challenges our judgment as an epic rather than as a rustic poet, and in this respect he must yield place to his incomparable master. Virgil, like Tennyson in the *Idylls of the King*, suffered from the fatal choice of an inferior hero. All the seas that laved the Italian shores could not wash away the guilt of Dido's seduction and desertion, and Virgil must have known it. The fault in him arose from artistic rather than moral imperfection. Virgil wrote the fourth book of the *Æneid* with the seventh and eighth books of the *Odyssey* in his mind. Odysseus deserted Calypso, and no one thought any the worse of him ; why should not Æneas dally with Dido and sail away ? But the poet failed to perceive that what to an ageless and immortal goddess was a light affliction which is but for a moment, was to a woman a mortal blow. Homer never could have made such a blunder. Not only in this respect, but in all others, the Greek poet's view of life is larger than that of the Roman. Homer's emotions are cosmic, they are high, we cannot attain unto them. Virgil's emotions are those that throb through men and women every hour. When dangers thicken, how wistful his

hope, how childlike his trust in God! "O passi graviora ; dabit deus his quoque finem." In the midst of affliction he bethinks him of the joy of remembering perils passed : " Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit." Again he commits himself with resignation to the hands of Providence : " Quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur." And in the black hour there comes to him a ray of light : " Forsan miseros meliora sequentur." Precious words these that have earned the love and gratitude of unnumbered wayfarers along the rugged roads of earth. But do not let us deceive ourselves ; in nobility, in moral majesty, they fade into nothingness beside the words of Sarpedon to Glaucus ; and Virgil's pretty pictures are as Watteau to Michelangelo when compared with such a scene as that when the mourning king with his dead son came to the eddying Xanthus, and dawn of the saffron mantle covered all the earth. The sun and the moon never stand still in Homer ; in deep, unbroken stillness Nature moves ; and man, with his little tragedies, lies in awful solitude at the conflux of eternities.

THE EMPEROR JULIAN

The applause of mankind sometimes seems like the cheers in a French theatre ; an interested band begin a shout of approbation, and the rest of the spectators take up the cry. Hence it happens that great and picturesque figures in the world's history are often passed by with ignorance and indifference, while lesser men, advertised

by their clagues, attract the notice of all. A strangely neglected character is the Roman Emperor Julian, whom the Church has branded with the epithet "apostate," who strove and failed to preserve the old order and the old civilisation against the encroachments of a new faith destructive of old beliefs, who rivalled the glory of Julius Cæsar in the West, and who in the East found his death while treading in the footsteps of Alexander. In earlier times, when ecclesiastical controversy filled a large space in literature, Julian was the pivot of a good deal of discussion, mostly unprofitable and ignorant. He was even drawn into contemporary politics. In the reign of James II. a parson named Samuel Johnson published a learned and elaborate parallel between Julian and that monarch, which work provoked an answering treatise of whimsical erudition from a "Minister of London." The German Strauss concealed an indictment of the king of Prussia beneath a sketch of Julian's character; Neander and the Abbé de la Bletterie composed useful monographs upon him. Dr Rendall, of Charterhouse, wrote a criticism of his life and work as the Hulsean Essay for 1876, which unhappily is out of print. But the majority of persons who know anything about this remarkable monarch and philosopher, if they do not seek Ammianus and the other originals, gain their knowledge from the pages of Gibbon. A new and very learned authority, in the person of Miss Alice Gardner, of Newnham College, must now be added to the list. This clever lady has gathered together pretty nearly everything that is known of the Emperor, and

has compiled a tolerably lucid summary of the obscure religious controversies of the time. But she is a scholar rather than an artist, and her book does not leave in the mind that definite image of the man and his time that the chapters of Gibbon produce. Gibbon is just as learned, but he uses his knowledge with artistic economy. This faculty Miss Gardner lacks, and hence her book is too much like a collection of references strung together by a slender thread. She is highly interesting, however, from her deep sympathy with her hero and her obvious fear to give that sympathy full play. In her nervous anxiety to be fair all round she makes some ingenious allowances for that miserable scoundrel, the eunuch-governed and bloodthirsty Constantius, excuses which would have filled the gentle Gregory Nazianzen with amazement and disgust. It is no paradox to say that an historian should never try to be fair. If he cannot be fair without trying, let him be unfair : his work will be more excellent in point of art, and just as instructive in point of fact.

Miss Gardner has come nearer to the secret of Julian's policy than any other writer. "In the triumph of Christianity Julian foresaw the Dark Ages"; but, she adds, "we cannot wonder that he did not see the Renaissance on the other side." We need not wonder, indeed, for had he seen it his policy would have remained the same. Partly owing to the shrill fury of ecclesiastical writers, and partly owing to his own passion for theology, which peeps out from almost everything he wrote, the world has been persuaded to regard as a

religious crusade what was a purely political movement. In dealing with such a period as the fourth century, at the outset one must avoid a common misapprehension, and must endeavour to realise the growth and evolution of the Christian religion, which never passed from perfection to degeneration, but which on the contrary passed from the poorest origins through an ever-ascending scale of moral progress ; so that the Christian beliefs in each period are better than those of the preceding. To suppose that the word Christianity implied to Julian's contemporaries what it does to us is absurd. Let anyone who doubts this fact read the invectives of Gregory Nazianzen, and he will soon find that the Christian practices and beliefs of that time are almost as repugnant to our feelings, almost as hostile to our most sacred convictions, as are the beliefs and practices of Dahomey at the present time. We must not look upon Julian as the butcher of meek lambs, but rather as the whipper-in of snarling curs. To understand the policy of Julian one must understand that Christianity as accepted and practised during his life, unlike our purified religion, was not a faith to compel the adhesion of the best and most enlightened minds, and, further, one must inquire into the relations between Church and State. Now, the Church was transformed from a proscribed secret society into a powerful political weapon by Constantine, who, casting about for some bond to hold together his scattered empire, some prop for his tottering throne, lit upon the underground organisation of the Church. To him and to his immediate successors Christianity was an instru-

ment of policy and not a discipline of soul. It is Julian's conspicuous merit to have foreseen that Constantine's policy was wrong, and that the very influence upon which he relied to keep the empire together, if unrestrained, must inevitably smash to atoms the old order of the world.

As Miss Gardner acutely points out, Julian foresaw the Dark Ages. What the ultimate developments of Christianity might be he probably did not know, and perhaps did not care ; but he saw most clearly that the immediate effect of the triumph of the Church would be the triumph of barbarism within and without, and the utter overthrow of society. The new wine of this religion he believed must burst the old bottles of Hellenic culture and Roman discipline, and burst them sure enough it did. Its stern exclusiveness was incompatible with that large tolerance and tranquil indifference which lay at the foundation of the pagan order. It was the first persecuting religion in Europe ; never before had men thought to slay one another over theological niceties ; and the moment the State recognised, regulated, and promoted such methods of controversy, the particular civilisation of the ancient world was doomed. Rome absorbed the gods of its conquered nations, and found for them places within the Pantheon ; the Church struck at them all, and, having overthrown them, decked them out as devils. Furthermore, this conquering influence was beneath the best morals and the highest intelligence of the time, which scorned the puerilities over which it struggled,

and hated what seemed to be its insensate cruelty. Where the Church did succeed in making some impression upon the culture of the age, the effect was bad; the semi-pagan Christianity of the Greek Church, which is largely divorced from morals, shows us what form the religion took in contact with the ancient civilisation. It could not live by compromise or by amalgamation; to become a real power it must build up an entirely new society from the nethermost foundation stone. The Hun and the Goth and the Middle Ages were needed to prepare the way for the purified faith of Christ. To men to-day looking backward from a serene height of human progress, attained, in part at least, by the ladder of the faith, the efforts and policy of Julian may seem as wicked as futile. But to him, with clear, strong sight, perceiving the black clouds that gathered over everything beautiful, over all that was wise and orderly and good, may it not well have seemed a sacred duty to strengthen the wavering line, to stablish and continue the march of the old world? Nay, we too, in all loyalty to true religion, may entertain the question whether the success of Julian might not have promoted the cause of Christ as well as the welfare of men. Christianity itself he could not stamp out. He never would have tried to do so had he shorn the Church of every shred of political power. Had he accomplished this result, the purification of the faith might have come more quickly, the world might have been spared the Dark Ages, and all the wisdom and the beauty which then perished would still have been our precious heritage.

Julian's cousin and predecessor, Constantius, came to the throne under circumstances not unlike those which occurred in Servia a few years ago. The metropolitan of Belgrade celebrated the murder of the king and queen by singing the "Te Deum" in the cathedral, and a horror-stricken writer in the English press exclaimed that surely never before had the hymn been sung on such an occasion ! It has been sung hundreds of times on such occasions, and if it was not sung when Constantius butchered the younger branch of the Flavian family, the reason was that it had not then been written. Julian was a boy of six, and his life was spared possibly because of his youth, more probably by some accident. Until he was four-and-twenty he was kept a prisoner, and he was compelled, under peril of his life, to observe the public rites of the Church. It is commonly supposed that the cruelty and wickedness of Constantius engendered in the mind of Julian a hatred of Christianity, but this is not at all likely ; though we may imagine that, just as boys from rigid Puritan homes are often tempted to licence of life and thought, so Julian from his early discipline may have acquired some distaste for Christian doctrine and observances. But such prejudice could have little influence upon a man of Julian's character.

As a matter of fact, his attitude to Christianity has been absurdly misrepresented. Most persons who know anything about him seem to regard him as a fourth-century Mr Bradlaugh, consumed with the desire to pervert true believers to infidelity. Such an

idea exhibits ignorance of the man himself, and of the conditions of Church and State in his day. With Constantine and Constantius, Christianity was a policy, not a religion. Neither of these princes was baptized into the Church until he reached his death-bed, and even then the rite was probably performed through the insistence of prelates or from considerations of statecraft. But of Christianity as a supreme moral and theological influence they knew and cared nothing. Julian's Hellenism was also in great part political, but not altogether ; it was, besides, a sentimental hobby. In his fine and noble character there were two weak points. He had an incurable love of scribbling, and, as Ammianus frankly confesses, he loved applause. There can be no doubt that he endeavoured to model himself upon Alexander the Great, and between the two young men there are some surprising points of resemblance. It sometimes pleased Alexander to pose as a philosopher, and it gratified the innocent vanity of Julian to dispute with doctors and to propound doctrines. But while Alexander's life was stained with crimes and vices, that of Julian was sanctified by a purity of mind and body that might have made him, had Providence so ordained it, one of the brightest confessors of the early Church. As it is, his memory has been loaded with the execrations of the faithful, and his honour has been branded with the stigma of apostasy. Such a fate the warrior-statesman never could have anticipated. That he should be known for all time because of his dealing with a few wild, warring sects, and that men should

occupy themselves for fifteen hundred years with half a dozen of his hastily scribbled and rather foolish pamphlets, would have seemed to him incredible. He had a juster sense of the proportion of things than some of us have. Mr Wise and his followers may suppose that the gaze of mankind is fixed on Walton Gaol. This is not a greater delusion than to imagine that the one great thought, the one great task of Julian, his captains, and his statesmen was to check the progress of Christianity. Julian was a prisoner of Constantius until he was four-and-twenty, and during those years his chief occupation was the not easy task of keeping his head on his shoulders. In the year 355 he was summoned to Milan, created Cæsar, and sent to Gaul to fight the Germans. For six years he fought a series of campaigns not less arduous and not less brilliant than those of Julius Cæsar. Constantius died at the end of the autumn of 361, and Julian, who reached Constantinople a few weeks later, spent the winter there, engaged in the reorganisation of the government. Julian was slain in battle in 363, and this short rest at his capital, and a few unhappy months of 362 passed at Antioch, constitute the only period of his manhood that was free from the cares of active warfare and generalship. From the day when Constantius, on the plains of Milan, cast round his shoulders the robe of Cæsar, and the young man muttered between his teeth the line of Homer, "Dark death and strenuous fate have come upon me," until the day in his thirty-second year when he perished upon the Persian spears, scarcely

twelve months in all were passed in peaceful occupations. A strange man this to be damned to fame as a theologian ! As well might Napoleon be remembered for all time because he made the Pope a prisoner.

Constantine had hoped to find in the Church a sure foundation for the imperial power. Julian believed the hope to be fallacious, and he sought for a new support. What society most needed was order, and the Church was a whirlwind of disorder. Hostile sects, quarrelling for the most part about Greek words, the meaning of which they did not understand, disturbed the whole civilised world when Julian succeeded to the Empire. A wonderful inspiration came to him ; he re-discovered and applied the principle of religious toleration. That is why Arian and Catholic, Donatist and Eustathian, Apollinarian, Luciferian, and all the rest of them united to execrate him. The revenues of the temples, which had been appropriated by the Church, he restored to the pagan priests, and he took the machinery of education out of the hands of the clergy. Julian had many ideas far in advance of his age ; he was a firm believer in "atmosphere," and he insisted that the head teachers in the schools should profess the established faith and not Christianity. It was a foolish plan, quite unworthy of the imperial philosopher ; it did not call forth passive resistance, which was not fashionable in those days, but it stirred up a great amount of active opposition and helped to increase the educational influences of the Church. The effect of his policy of toleration outlasted him. It enabled the fittest in the Church to

survive. It put an end for a while to the methods of brutal terrorism, of murder and outrage, by which each triumphant sect in its brief day of success sought to enforce its incomprehensible doctrines. And, furthermore, the great ideas and unflinching dutifulness of Julian have not been without influence upon the minds of men. As Miss Gardner finely writes : " If we look to the main principle by which he was throughout guided, we see that it was a settled determination to prevent, so far as in him lay, the destruction, by what he regarded as barbarous and degrading forces, of that fair fabric of ancient civilisation under which men had learned to venerate beauty and order, to aim at a reasonable, self-contained life, and to live in orderly society under intelligible laws and humane institutions. And who shall say that this principle is an unworthy one, or that a life lived in obedience to its dictates could fail to achieve some good results besides those that may appear on the surface ? "

PETRONIUS ARBITER

The history of the *Satyricon* of Petronius is a romance in itself. It is attributed to the Arbiter Elegantiarum of Nero's court, but the attribution is little more than a learned speculation, and furthermore it is not absolutely certain that the *Cena Trimalchionis* is not a mediæval forgery. The little scrap of Petronius that undoubtedly came down from classical antiquity was first printed at Venice in 1499, and contained only thirty-eight pages ;

but from allusions and quotations by John Parvus of Salisbury, Bishop of Chartres, who wrote the life of Becket, we know that a more complete edition of Petronius must have existed in the twelfth century. About the middle of the seventeenth century a person who called himself Martinus Statilius, but whose real name was Petrus Petitus, asserted that he had discovered in a library belonging to one Nicolaus Cippius, at Traun, in Dalmatia, a manuscript containing the missing parts of Petronius, including the *Cena Trimalchionis* which John of Salisbury had referred to. Twenty years elapsed between the supposed discovery of the manuscript and its first appearance in print, and then the scholars of Europe were divided into two hostile camps, one of which accepted the genuineness of the work, while the other, headed by Adrian de Valois and the German Wagenseil, fiercely denounced it as a forgery, bearing marks of imposture on every page. In 1668 the MS. was sent to Rome and submitted to a commission of unnamed experts, who pronounced in favour of its antiquity, who found that it was at least three hundred years old ; and as at that date there was no man living who could have written such a forgery, they declared it to be a genuine survival of antiquity. But seven years later the famous Dr Spon, the friend of Gassendi, examined the manuscript and found the date November 20, 1423, inscribed on one of its pages. The manuscript is now in the National Library of France, and the pages containing the *Cena* are marked by most suspicious rubbings and variations of ink.

On the other hand, though the monkish scribes of the twelfth and succeeding centuries were deeply learned Latinists and were perilous forgers, it is unlikely that any of them would possess the knowledge of the little details of Roman life in Nero's time which the writer of the *Cena* exhibits. For instance, he would hardly have been aware that the chief magistrate of Cumæ was a prætor and not a duumvir, as mentioned by Petronius in paragraph 65, one of the pieces of internal evidence by which scholars have determined the locus of the story. But Cumæ was a municipal district which included Baïæ and Misenum, and Cicero applies the name Cumanum to his villa, which was at Puteoli, so that the house of Trimalchio may not have been actually in the *urbs Græca*. There were many lacunæ in the manuscript found by Statilius, and these tempted the pens of later forgers. In 1690 one Francis Nodot submitted to the French Academy what purported to be a copy of a manuscript of a complete *Satyricon*. The manuscript itself was never forthcoming, and there was strong evidence that the copy had been pieced together with wonderful ingenuity from John of Salisbury and other sources. It has been conjectured that Nicholas Chorier, the notorious author of the *Elegantie Latini Sermonis*, was the compiler of this forgery. Another audacious hoax was practised on the learned world in 1800 by a Spaniard named Joseph Marchena, who published a fragment of Petronius purporting to be extracted from a very ancient MS. found in the monastery of St Gall. This interpolation is a very

short and very obscene passage in which the writer imitated so perfectly the style of Petronius that he deceived the very elect among classical scholars, and it was only when he admitted the hoax that the forgery stood exposed. Marchena became a naturalised Frenchman, and was secretary to Moreau during his campaign on the Rhine, and the forgery was composed in answer to a challenge from the general. In this connection it is interesting to note that Professor Peck suggests Petronius to have been a Gaul, an ancient Frenchman, and says Petronius was "the literary predecessor of those preternaturally clever writers of modern France whose spirit at least is that which breathes in every page of the *Satyricon*. If he was a Roman by race, it is strange indeed that he had no predecessors and no true successor; but that to see a fitting parallel for his strangely brilliant fiction we must pass over the intervening centuries and find it only in our own time and in the literary art of modern France."

To the ordinary reader who has no special interest in Roman archæology or in the *sermo plebeius*, the chief interest of Petronius lies in the quaint pictures of his picaresque novel and in its homely wisdom. When Seleucus died he "joined the majority"; we are told that "too many doctors did for him." There is something very modern about the *obiter dictum*: "*Medicus enim nihil aliud est quam animi consolatio.*" Many of us, no doubt, have wondered how the dead came to be called "the majority" or "the great majority." Mr

Lowe traces this phrase to Plautus, Aristophanes, the poet Crinagoras in the Greek Anthology (a poet of the first century of the Christian era), Pausanias, and Polybius ; while Eustathius, the great archbishop of Thessalonica, found the suggestion of it in the second and third lines of the *Odyssey*. A striking variant of the mote and the beam is : "In alio peduculum vides, in te ricinum non vides." Trimalchio says of brown bread : "I like it better than white, as it is so strengthening, and it is as good as medicine for me"—an opinion still held by many an old wife, despite the demonstrations of modern science. To Petronius mathematicians were astrologers, crafty fellows to be avoided. Trimalchio's freedman boasts : "Non didici geometrias" ; but the author may only have been expressing a common opinion of his time, for Tacitus writes : "Mathematici, genus hominum potentibus infidum sperantibus fallax." It is singular that persons who undertake the most exact and perhaps exacting study to which the mind of man can be devoted should be confused by the great historian with the vile crew of fortune-tellers of Poppæa Sabina, impostors that lured her infatuated husband to destruction.

"IVANHOE"

Truly of this wonderful book it may be said that age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety. Ninety years have passed away since it was written. Scott had published all his famous Scottish stories, *Waverley*, *Rob Roy*, *Old Mortality*, *The Antiquary*,

The Heart of Midlothian, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The country had been taken by storm, and English readers had discovered to their amazement that Scotland has a great history and a great literature. But, as our own clever writers of the kailyard found out, the public do not like too much of a good thing. Scott perceived the danger, and avoided it by a bold experiment. He invented what we call the "historical novel," wrote *Ivanhoe*, and won a renown which from that day to this has grown. To most living Englishmen and Scotchmen *Ivanhoe* was a delight of boyhood. How many lads have peeled a willow wand and vainly tried to hit it with an arrow in imitation of Locksley ; or, playing at the Ashby tourney, have mocked in childish treble the lion roar, "Desdichado to the rescue !" or, storming the feigned fortresses of boyhood, have heard in their ears the tumult of strife which raged round the Castle of Torquilstone ? And then in after life they have found rest and refreshment from labour and trouble in the acorn-strewn glades of Rotherham, listening to the wisdom of Wamba, the jester ; and in the cell of the jovial friar, making merry with him and the "Black Sluggard." And in the workaday world they have known men and women better because these have seemed to them like Rowenas and Rebeccas, Richards and Athelstanes, Cedrics and Ivanhoes, Bois-Guilberts and De Bracys. Other shrines they have worshipped at ; good books, bad books, books by artists in literature, books by experts in self-advertisement, subjective

books, objective books, books with plots, books with problems, all have claimed their interest, and many their admiration; but, like an aged wanderer to his boyhood's home, they come back again to Scott; and, amid all the disillusion and disappointments that gather on the downward slope of life, they offer reverent and joyful thanks to the Giver of all good for Homer, Virgil, Scott.

Of the multitudinous novels, “palpitating with genius,” that flow from the press in our times, one wonders how many are ever read a second time. Now, a book once read remains a book unknown. Not until a man or a boy has mastered a work in the sweat of his brow does it become a part of himself, and not until it has become a part of himself is his opinion about it worth very much. He skims through some “book of the week” in an idle hour, he likes it or dislikes it, he talks about it over the dinner-table, perhaps he writes a criticism or an “appreciation” of it, and in six months' time it has passed out of his mind and character as utterly as though it had never been. In moments of deep emotion no word or thought from it ever rises to his lips; there surges up instead some apophthegm from Horace, some stately verse from Virgil, some rolling line from Homer, some flash of divine wisdom from Shakspeare. These are the things which, by toil and pain, have got themselves inground into his nature. One does not study Scott in quite the same way, but the Wizard's charm, which lures one to read and re-read him all through life, gives one a knowledge of him almost as intimate.

Each perusal of a book such as *Ivanhoe* reveals something new ; blemishes as well as merits unfold themselves, and in the end the constant reader loves the story as much for its faults as for its virtues. *Ivanhoe*, as I have said, was Scott's first excursion into English history, and many were the liberties that he took with the annals of our land. Everyone knows that he blessed the bed of the Confessor with issue (apologising, indeed, for so doing), whereas the historical Edward and his queen, Edith, died childless. Mr Andrew Lang, in his *Homer and the Epic*, applying to *Ivanhoe* the methods of the "Higher Criticism," points out that Robin Hood actually lived in the reign of Edward II., and first appears in literature in the reign of Edward III., yet *Ivanhoe* depicts him in the England of Richard I. From this and other circumstances, Mr Lang formulates the burlesque conclusion that the novel is not the work of Scott, but "an early mediæval version of the Odysseus Saga," in which the introduction of Robin Hood is "an interpolation to be attributed to a poet of the school of Piers Plowman, probably a Nottingham man."

Mr Lang might have made even more plausible his literary practical joke had he perceived a fact which has not before been noticed. The chronology of *Ivanhoe*, disentangled from the story, puts the reign of Richard I. at the end of the eleventh century or the beginning of the next, instead of at the end of the twelfth. This is easily proved. In the third chapter, Cedric the Saxon is introduced to the reader as a man "approaching to his sixtieth year." Now, the action of *Ivanhoe* takes

place in A.D. 1194, the year when Cœur de Lion returned to England from his Austrian prison. Cedric, therefore, was born in 1134. Now, let us proceed to the twenty-first chapter, where we find Cedric and Athelstane prisoners in the disused banqueting hall of the Castle of Torquilstone. We read: “‘Yes,’ said Cedric, half speaking to himself, and half addressing himself to Athelstane, ‘it was in this very hall that my father feasted with Torquil Wolfgang when he entertained the valiant and unfortunate Harold, then advancing against the Norwegians, who had united themselves to the rebel Tosti,’” and he proceeds to describe the events which culminated at the battle of Hastings. But, inasmuch as Hereward, Cedric’s father, was a leader in the Saxon army, it is fair to assume that he was twenty years old at the time of the feast with Torquil, which took place a few days before Hastings, in the year 1066. Hereward, therefore, was born in 1046, and had achieved the ripe age of eighty-eight at the birth of his son Cedric. But this is not all. In the Castle, Cedric encounters Ulrica, daughter of his father’s friend Torquil. When the elder Front de Bœuf stormed the fortress, he slew Torquil and his sons, and made Ulrica his paramour. This occurred twenty years before the date of the story, or in 1174, for Ulrica says to Cedric, “Thou art the first man I have seen for twenty years by whom God was feared or man regarded.” But if Torquil, who also fought at Hastings, was twenty at the time of the battle, he met a violent death at the hands of Front de Bœuf,

senior, in his one hundred and twenty-eighth year. He was indeed a remarkable man. At the time of her capture, Ulrica cannot have been more than twenty. She herself, speaking to Cedric, says, "Here I dwelt till premature age has stamped its ghastly features on my countenance," and, furthermore, we have the fact that she was able to kindle the unhallowed passions of Front de Bœuf, junior. Her age at the time of the story cannot have exceeded forty, and her father, therefore, at the time of her birth was one hundred and eight years old ! One furiously suspects also that Athelstane was originally drawn as a son of the Confessor, and that "Adeling" was introduced at the last moment as a second thought. It is curious, at any rate, that his mother was the "noble Edith." Finally, Rowena's father seems to have been a pre-Conquest hero, for he had "been a chief renowned for wisdom, courage, and generosity, and his memory was highly honoured by his oppressed countrymen." Rowena certainly was not much more than twenty ; her venerable father, therefore, must have been nearly one hundred and forty years old when she was born. Such are the considerations which lead me to believe that Scott, while writing *Ivanhoe*, had it about his head that Richard I. came to the throne a century before his historical accession.

RABELAIS

A crux of critical dispute has been raised afresh in France by the *Literary Studies* of M. Emile Faguet.

Immediately, the controversy concerns Rabelais, but its ultimate scope is much wider. It is, in fact, a revival of the old warfare between two schools of criticism, one of which regards the principal motive of imaginative literature as purely didactic, the other as purely æsthetic. For such a discussion Rabelais constitutes an excellent text, inasmuch as hardly any two authorities agree about his merits and his purposes ; and there is a complete want of data to determine the rightness or the wrongness of any of them. We may imagine a similar literary feud to be kindled hundreds of years hence by the discovery of a nineteenth-century work entitled *The Book of Nonsense*. Let us suppose critical attention to be arrested by a striking stanza in that volume hymning the embarrassment of an “an old man in a tree who was horribly bored by a bee. When they said, ‘Does it buz?’ he replied, ‘Yes, it does ; it’s a regular brute of a bee.’” The first school would contend that the object of the poet was to excite mirth by a concatenation of incongruous ideas. They would point out the antecedent improbability of an old man climbing a tree, and the absurdity of supposing that he would remain there to endure such annoyance ; they would direct attention to the foolishness of the question asked by the persons below, when it must have been known to all of them that buzzing is the natural and invariable method of expressing apiarian emotion ; and they would dwell upon the inconsequential character of the second clause of the old man’s reply. Finally, they would endeavour by analysis and by analogy to explain the conception of

humour prevalent in the Victorian era. The other school would set out with far different aims and ideas. From the meaningless absurdity of the verse they would argue that the poet, beneath a surface of flippant allegory, intended to display some important moral truth. The bee would at once become the object of fruitful speculation. Did the poet merely allude to an individual specimen of the genus *Apis*, or did he employ the word with an esoteric meaning? Might not "bee" represent the letter "B," and might not this be the initial of some well-known name? Historical inquiry into the date of publication and contemporaneous affairs soon would reveal the fact that, somewhere about the time involved, one Jabez Balfour attracted to himself much public attention. Now all would be clear. The bee, of course, is Balfour, and the old man is the unsophisticated investor. By the casual irrelevance of the people's question, the poet subtly indicates the callous indifference of the multitude to moral iniquity, and, by the warmth of the old man's reply, the indignation felt by good persons in contemplating commercial irregularity, especially when they have lost money by it. All critics of this school would agree that "bee" represented Balfour, but there would be some dispute as to the identity of the person in question. The discovery would be made that "old man" and "grand old man" were common epithets of Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and philological investigation would reveal the fact that "to be up a tree" was a slang expression, perhaps of American origin, meaning to be

in difficulties. Clearly then, the old man represents Mr Gladstone after the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, and the Balfour was a Conservative leader who flourished about that period. The inquiry of the people suggests, with scarcely veiled irony, the mischievous activity of the House of Lords, while the passionate vehemence of the old man's answer indicates the irrevocable resolve of the Liberal Minister to reform the Constitution.

It is to be hoped that this fanciful little flight of criticism has helped to make plain the nature of the controversy revived by M. Faguet. Is the immortal work of Rabelais merely a book of nonsense, or is it a precious allegory within which those that have eyes to see may discover a great philosophy? Let it be understood that no one, not even M. Faguet, pretends that Rabelais lacked moments of serious intention. The point in dispute is whether the book is the expression of gay and boisterous jollity, or whether it is a craftily designed weapon of destructive criticism. Individual feeling must determine the problem, for the evidence is conflicting and the authorities hopelessly are divided. Bernardin de St Pierre classes Rabelais with the world's great reformers. Rabelais, he says, broke down monkish power, Cervantes the power of chivalry, while Fénelon, with his *Télémaque*, prepared the way for the Revolution. Lamartine, on the other hand, dubs Rabelais "the scavenger of humanity." M. Eugène Noel declared that "he snatched the men of his time from the darkness and famine of the old world." A youthful judg-

ment of Voltaire upon him is that he was "a drunken philosopher who wrote only when drunk." Etienne Dolet, the foeman of Erasmus, thought so well of him that he composed a Latin poem, in which the ghost of a thief recently hanged glories because his body has been dissected by Rabelais. This is surely a pretty and original device for expressing admiration of a medical friend, and, modernised and localised, it might be made to do duty again. But all the eulogists of Pantagrue's creator are feeble compared with Michelet, who likened him to Jacob wrestling with God, and suggested that *la dive bouteille* contained the water of life. In his later years Voltaire apologised for his earlier accusation, and, while refusing to place him beside Horace, described him as "the prince of good jesters." This opinion is endorsed by Sainte Beuve, who says : "Yes, Rabelais is a jester, but a unique jester, a Homeric jester ; and this judgment will remain that of all persons of sense and taste." Sainte Beuve, with his fine feeling and clear insight, detected the great Merryman's flashes of seriousness, but, regarding them, he utters a characteristic judicial warning. "While recognising the serious parts," he says, "it is necessary to guard against imagining and creating them, a proceeding that must make Rabelais laugh, if he, among the immortals, cares anything about us." To follow the theories of a man so uniformly sane as Sainte Beuve usually is safe, but in this particular case perhaps it is more prudent to cast in one's lot with La Bruyère, and to regard Rabelais as "an enigma which one may call inexplicable."

But M. Faguet is of quite another mind ; he modestly confesses his inability to find any problem at all. Whatever difficulty exists is the outcome of an incurable propensity of critics to manufacture mysteries. M. Faguet would have us to read Rabelais on the surface, to laugh and to be contented, not to delve in unprofitable mines where no ore is. "I find no enigma," he says, "and if not no depth, at any rate no abyss, in Rabelais." For this opinion M. Faguet is able to advance several ingenious reasons, one of them peculiarly subtle. All Pantagruelists are acquainted with the prologue to the first book, in which Rabelais hints at the hidden virtues to be found in his work, and then breaks into a shout of laughter against Plutarch, Ponticus, Cornutus, and others who discovered allegories in Homer, and against that "Frère Lubin" who evolved all the Gospel from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Then he roundly abuses some person who is supposed to have said that about the books of Rabelais there is more savour of midnight wine than of midnight oil ; and, lastly, he expresses his supreme desire to be known as a Merry-Andrew. Such a prologue, of course, seems designed to set readers searching for concealed doctrine. But M. Faguet credits Rabelais with the malign intention of fooling the world ; he knew how men gape after marvels, and his sides would shake as he thought how wise persons, grubbing for a philosophy that does not exist, would lose the luxury of laughter. A more striking argument is drawn from the circumstances under which the work was written. Rabelais spent twenty years in producing

a book of five hundred pages. It was his custom to write for a quarter of an hour after supper on such occasions as he happened to be alone. M. Faguet observes, in a picturesque sentence: "It is one of those books that make themselves, by a sort of vagabond vegetation, upon the fringe of a laborious life, and in the interstices of the furrows." Certainly this is not the method of persons with a mission for reforming the universe, or even a small portion of it. They do not ponder for twenty years, and scribble their thoughts in odd quarters of an hour. Usually they study their problem for a month or two, and, with the help of typewriters, in a fortnight produce a volume. Whether or not we accept M. Faguet's conclusions, we must admit the force of his contention that the work of Rabelais is "simply a joyous book. It is a work of burlesque imagination; it contains no myth and no parable; it contains allusions to the affairs of the time, but without involution and without concealment; it contains things serious, but they are very direct and very clearly expressed." Finally, there is one judgment of M. Faguet in which all lovers of the Master will concur. "Le secret de Rabelais," he says, "c'est qu'il sait conter, c'est qu'il est un conteur." His is an art that has no rules, that is a gift, and that, because it is a pure gift, rarely is found among writers. Most story-tellers weary. Rabelais, when he spins stories, never wearies.

Section IV

An Amateur's Views of Homer

“ Read Homer once and you can read no more ;
For all books else appear so mean, so poor ;
Verse will seem prose ; but still persist to read,
And Homer will be all the books you need.”

JOHN SHEFFIELD, *An Essay on Poetry*.

HOMER : THE MAN AND THE POET

A POMPOUS peer walking down Piccadilly was accosted by a stranger, who said : " Mr Smith, I believe ! " " Sir," replied his lordship, " if you believe that you will believe anything." This is perhaps the best answer that can be given to the learned persons who say of Homer's poems that, like Topsy, they "'spects they grow'd." Many men of more judgment and less learning than these scholars would dismiss such a theory as a curious form of dementia against which it would be idle to argue ; but Mr Andrew Lang, as urbane as versatile, remembering that this strange belief has been held by men of the highest intellectual power, many of them old friends and colleagues of his own, returns to the problem in *Homer and his Age*. One cannot say that in it the last word about the paradox is said, because, so long as any of the distinguished men who adopted and elaborated the paradox survive, some form of defence will always be opposed to every new attack. But another generation of scholars, born to a wider and juster conception of things, will regard Mr Lang's book as a burial service to the Wolfian heresy which for eleven or twelve decades has perplexed and amused

educated persons. Time has ripened and strengthened Mr Lang's conviction that "the Homeric Epics, as wholes, and apart from passages gravely suspected in antiquity, present a perfectly harmonious picture of the entire life and civilisation of one single age." He was of that opinion when he published his delightful volume *Homer and the Epic* seventeen years ago. But then he was a voice crying in the academic wilderness, and no young man seeking honours in classics would have dared to accept his conclusions. No one could dispute his scholarship, so the disintegrating dons sniffed at him and let him alone, and contented themselves with the resolve that future Fellows of Merton and translators of Homer should be persons more amenable to the dictates of the Higher Criticism.

But much water has eddied down loud Scamander since then—if any hypercritical person object that there is no such river, let him study the map of Tasmania—and the world has begun to look askance at the Higher Criticism. When *Homer and the Epic* appeared, the gentleman who reviewed the book in the most "literary" of the London daily newspapers wrote: "If ever this (the question of origins) is to be solved, it is the microscopists, the smell-funguses, the grammarians, the digamma-hunters, *tous ces garçons-là* on whom Mr Lang looks down with Olympian scorn, who must furnish the key." The same critic—if he still lives—will sing a different song to-day, for digamma-hunting as a pursuit is discredited, and fungus-smelling is no longer a profitable occupation. It is the virtue of

Mr Lang's book that he has screwed up his courage to declare that the solution of the problems of literary criticism does not lie within the competency of grammarians and philologists. "May I say a word," he writes, "to the lovers of poetry who, in reading Homer, feel no more doubt than in reading Milton that, on the whole, they are studying a work of one age by one author? Do not let them be driven from their natural impression by the statement that science has decided against them. The certainties of the exact sciences are one thing, the opinions of Homeric commentators are other and very different things." I go further, and maintain that in this purely literary question the natural impression, the feeling of no doubt, is evidence in favour of the substantial unity of the Homeric Epics, against which all the changing and mutually conflicting hypotheses and conjectures of philology, archæology, and anthropology are as nothing in the balance. Mr John Clark, in his *History of Epic Poetry*, has well said: "No one that can diagnose literary proprietorship or gauge intellectual autocracy will ever believe Homer to have been a ghostly eponymus of the Homeridæ, or a convenient expression for a corporation of bards that wrote, and not all at the same period, epic rhapsodies with some centripetal quality to be thrown on a common stone-heap." Mr Lang's allusion to Milton reminds me that many years ago I suggested that he should apply the methods of Homeric criticism to *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. It is not too late for him to undertake the task, and to produce a *reductio*

ad absurdum which would be useful to young students overawed by the weight of separatist authority. He might easily disentangle an original "Satanaid," and prove that the Epics as we know them are a recension made by Dr Johnson of earlier epics belonging to various periods. It would be possible to support such a demonstration by powerful philological, mythological, and archæological arguments. The ingenious mind of Mr Lang might detect hundreds of late interpolations ; for instance, what could be more certain than that the passage in the tenth book where Adam speaks of his mother was not by the poet of Book VII., which describes the creation of man ; or that the lines in the first book, describing how the "barbarous sons" of the "populous North" spread beneath Gibraltar, were the production of a patriotic Spaniard, subsequent to the capture by Rooke and Byng in 1704. I respectfully commend these suggestions to Mr Lang, in the belief that he can, if he will, produce a little masterpiece.

One other line of inquiry must be followed before the Homeric paradox finally disappears. It must be treated as a development of its period. Not without significance is the fact that Wolf's *Prolegomena* was published in 1795, when the intellectual classes of Europe were surging in rebellion against the authority of tradition. Tradition had been employed for centuries to bolster up institutions and doctrines in Church and State that had revolted the best minds of the age, and in the general uprising it was inevitable that some spear should be couched, some bow drawn,

against the tradition of Homeric unity. The separatists were fortunate in their champion, Wolf, who hit on an argument which was unanswerable as long as his minor premise could be maintained. He said, in effect : "All long poems by one man have been transmitted in writing ; the long poems called Homer were not transmitted in writing, therefore they are not poems by one man." The theory held good until antiquarian research proved that writing was a tolerably familiar accomplishment at a period nearly as remote from Homer as Homer is from us, and that no sufficient reason can be produced why Homer should not have written out his poems and left them behind him. Then the bottom fell out of the Wolfian hypothesis, and the persons who accepted its conclusion ever since have been trying to find new reasons for it. The shifts to which they have been put Mr Lang describes with sedate malice, as when he quotes Mr Leaf, in 1892 dismissing the Pisistratean recension as "a legend without authority," and in 1900 employing it as a convenient support for his agglutinative Homer.

Dr Gilbert Murray's *History of Ancient Greek Literature* is a work in which a most learned and versatile scholar offered some of the fruits of his travail to general readers. Dr Murray has a good quality, also possessed by Mr Andrew Lang, not very often found in Greek experts : he is able sometimes to look at a literary question from a literary point of view, to emerge from the slough of philology and archæology, and to take his place at the side of the poet and the

lover of poetry. Therefore, it was with pleasure that some readers thought they discovered between the lines of the first chapter of the *History* the promise of a future contribution to Homeric criticism which was sure to be original and delightful. This implicit promise, if it really did exist, was fulfilled in the publication of *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, which is certainly delightful in its breadth and urbanity of treatment, and is original with a vengeance in its conclusions. Dr Murray's theory of Homeric "expurgations" is, I believe, original with him. I am not in the least convinced that such a process took place, and, if it did take place, it is almost enough to upset a second theory, to which I shall presently refer. But the theory of expurgations, whether historically established or not, may be applied as an instrument of criticism to the Homeric poems with astonishing results. Dr Murray imagines Homer—let the term mean what it may—working upon a mass of ancient, crude, and gross legends, as traditions, as scattered lays, or as already incorporated into an organic poem. The critic supposes the poet to have deliberately excluded matter intolerable to the taste of his time, and to have toned down other details which were offensive to it.

Dr Murray contends that Homer's silence as to certain gross forms of vice prevalent in his country is intentional and significant. There has, he says, been a very careful expurgation of divers cruel or barbarous practices. No prisoner is ever tortured; only Hector is maltreated, and he not until after his death, as the

poet is most careful to explain. Yet, according to the older legend with which the poet worked, Hector was undoubtedly dragged to death by the victor's chariot. In the *Ajax* of Sophocles, Teucer says : "Hector was gripped to the chariot rail and mangled till he gave up the ghost" ; and a passage in Euripides makes a similar statement. It is, therefore, significant that all such brutality should be absent from Homer, who plunges Achilles into deep remorse for the "shameful deeds" he wrought upon the dead body of his foe. There is a passage describing with gruesome detail the death of Adamas from a ghastly wound, and the poet, in an apologetic parenthesis, remarks that he struggled "only for a moment, not for long." In the *Odyssey*, where the handmaids of Penelope are strung up in a row, Homer, half ashamed of describing the slaughter of women, immediately observes : "Their feet struggled just for a little, but not for long." The most interesting result of the application of the expurgation theory is the conclusion that in the *Odyssey* the poet is less sensitive and refined in the matter of morals and good taste than in the *Iliad*. This is contrary to the generally accepted opinion, which regards the *Odyssey* both in subject and in treatment as later and more civilised than the *Iliad* ; but Dr Murray makes out a good case for his surprising contention. The occurrence in the first book of the *Odyssey* of poisoned arrow-heads, which are "completely cleaned" from the *Iliad*, is a striking piece of evidence. In passing, let me draw attention to Dr Murray's elaboration of Robertson Smith's hint that

the epithet of the Achæioi, "Kare komoontes," implies a vow by the Greek warriors to preserve, like Samson, their hair from the shears, and his ingenious but hardly convincing suggestion that the absence of feminine interest from the *Iliad* indicates a vow of chastity by the besieging army. One other little point I may mention. Not long ago a reviewer, ridiculing the work of a foolish writer who flooded his pages with words that he did not in the least understand, ironically suggested that Homer, when he called Hermes "argeiphontes," had no idea what the epithet meant, and just "slung it in" when he wanted to fill a pentasyllable lacuna. One is astonished to find Dr Murray gravely mentioning this epithet as an instance of "fair sounding words" to be found on every page "whose meaning seems to have been far from clear" to Homer himself, and which were introduced "so as to fill up the metre."

Dr Murray's final conclusion is indeed amazing. He will not have a personal Homer at any price, although he speaks of "his vibrating sympathy, his amazing language, and the fiery splendour of narrative which seems to have died out of the world when the *Iliad* was complete." He has persuaded himself that "Homer" is too majestic to be the work of one man. He will not even hear of a great poet working over and adapting earlier and imperfect poetic material. Indeed, he approaches the hypothesis of divine inspiration. "I believe," he says, "we are brought face to face with something in a sense greater and more august than individual genius." The poems "have behind them not

the imagination of one great poet, but the accumulated emotion, one may almost say, of the many successive generations who have heard and learned and themselves afresh re-created the old majesty and loveliness. They are like the watchwords of great causes for which men have fought and died, charged with power from the first to attract men's love, but now, through the infinite shining back of that love, grown to yet greater power. There is in them, as it were, the spiritual life-blood of a people." Very pretty, and within assigned limits of signification true! The *Æneid*, the *Divine Comedy*, and the works of Shakspeare are also the expression of the accumulated emotions of many generations and the spiritual life of a people; but the expression only became articulate in each case across the barrier of one man's teeth, through the working of one man's brain. To suppose that "Homer" was in any other sense the product of a multitude is as idle as it would be to contend that *Paradise Lost* was written by Cromwell's army, or *Hamlet* by the translators of the Authorised Version. Let Dr Murray suppose himself projected forward two thousand years; let him imagine that the Clarendon Press edition of *Hamlet* is the earliest surviving scrap of literature, separated from the next surviving scrap by one or two hundred years. What results would not his method produce? He would discover—and he would be right—the work of several hands, he would shrewdly suspect that the English could not be the English of the period when the play came into existence, he would find traces of the tradi-

tions of widely separated generations, he would be puzzled by inconsistencies in the text. All these things would be the inevitable consequence of literary, linguistic, and historical criticism. But they would not disprove the individual existence of Shakspeare, or—that we may anticipate indignant protests from Colney Hatch—let us say, of Bacon. With deep respect, I submit that this is not a problem to be solved by the researches and speculations of scholars. Indeed, there is no problem, for, unless some of the deepest intuitions of the human mind are untrustworthy, the “Homer” we possess—allowing for the attrition of time—is the work of a man and not of a syndicate, just as the Clarendon Press *Hamlet* is the work of a man and not of a syndicate.

In a recent number of the *Quarterly Review* Mr A. W. Verrall had a delightful article on “The First Homer,” which proved that the range of Homeric speculation is not yet exhausted. If I understand Mr Verrall rightly, he argues that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came into existence by a process similar to that by which the canon of the Scriptures was determined. In the sixth—or was it the twelfth?—century before Christ, there was in existence a great mass of “Homeric” poetry of various degrees of merit and authenticity, and some forgotten and undiscoverable “council” got itself together and, out of these materials, patched together our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The theory that Homer and the Bible got themselves together by the same process is ingenious and plausible. Each was the sacred book of a race, to

each the greatest achievements of a race have been attributed. Mr Verrall develops with much skill the theory of Lysurgus, "that the whole Athenian triumph, the repulse of the Persians, Marathon and Salamis, the Athenian empire, had a principal cause in the studies which, in the previous generation, they as a people had adopted and espoused. It all came, he says, in the plainest terms, from their familiarity with certain literature—to wit, the poetry of Homer." It has been pointed out that the influence of the Bible on building up a State and a nation, as in the case of Scotland, has been intellectual rather than moral, and Mr Verrall acutely remarks that "the mental advantage, immense when it was uncommon, of being generally trained in the comprehension and exposition of some good literature had surely more to do with making the Athenians into the leaders of Hellas than the fact that more men there than in other cities could repeat the lines in which Hector commends the sacrifice of self to country." Mr Verrall asks us to believe that the "Homeric poems" which thus edified the Athenian State were the "cycle" of which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were two parts, and of which our knowledge depends on Proclus, a grammarian who wrote a hundred and forty years after Christ.

It may be pointed out that our Homer was acquainted with at least two numbers of the cycle, for he makes Demodocus tell the story, from the *Iliupersis*, of the wooden horse "telling the tale from that point," and Phemius the minstrel, in the first book of the *Odyssey*,

sings snatches to the weeping Penelope of the *Nostoi*, which Telemachus declares "rings newest in the ears of man." Therefore the *Nostoi*, which was the most modern canto of the cycle, was anterior to the *Odyssey*, and consequently the *Odyssey* was not a part of the cycle. The cycle "was a sort of history in epic verse, beginning with the beginning of the world and carried down through the heroic age of the Theban and Trojan wars until the end of the latter and the return of the Greeks. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, such apparently as we possess them, were parts of the story, standing in their proper places." The authority for this statement, against which there is a strong internal evidence, is Suidas, a Greek lexicographer who lived eleven or twelve hundred years after Christ, and who says that the ancients regarded the whole cycle as the work of Homer. Against this we may put the statement of Herodotus that the *Cypria* was not the work of Homer. Thus we must assume that the ancients at a very early date had begun to grow sceptical. Mr Verrall suggests that some body of early scholars sat to determine the canon of Homer, and that by a process of selection and rejection they disentangled for us our *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. The theory is fascinating because it disposes of all the internal inconsistencies of the poems. How can we jib at the "Making of the Armour" and at the Greek Wall when we remember that the saints and scholars who decided the canon of the Scriptures passed, apparently without noticing them, the most irreconcilable inconsistencies in the

accounts of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection? But Mr Verrall's council on the canon only pushes back the difficulty a stage. Who were these poets who furnished the grandest poetical materials known to man, and who passed away without leaving behind even a faint echo of their names? Is it conceivable that of old there were two poets, one of whom we call Homer, who sang the fire version of the sending of Patroclus, and another of equal majesty, who sang the embassy version, whose name has perished from the earth, and whose glorious work, by an inexplicable coincidence, has got patched up with the work of the other incomparable singer?

Such a theory makes too heavy a claim on our credulity. The difficulties which these theories are invented to surmount mostly rise from the fact that scholars rarely understand how the minds of poets work. Mr Verrall is driven to the A and the B versions of the sending of Patroclus, because in one place the camp of the Greeks is girt by a wall, and in another place Homer forgets all about the wall, and makes Agamemnon behold the camp-fires of the Trojans, which the wall, of course, would hide from him. Well, and why should not the shepherd of the people have climbed to the top of the wall to smoke his pipe in peace, and to plan out the next day's campaign? Is it not absurd to expect that the poet would stop to measure the height of the wall when the fire of song touched his lips, and there broke forth a passage whose music has echoed down the ages? "Now, beside the ships,

the other leaders of the whole Achaian host were sleeping all night long, by soft sleep overcome ; but Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of the host, sweet sleep held not, so many things he debated in his mind. And even as when the lord of fair-tressed Hera lighteneth, fashioning either a mighty rain unspeakable, or hail, or snow, when the flakes sprinkle all the ploughed lands, or fashioning, perchance, the wide mouth of bitter war, even so oft in his breast groaned Agamemnon from the very deep of his heart, and his spirits trembled within him. And wheresoever he looked toward that Trojan plain, he marvelled at the many fires that blazed in front of Ilios, and at the sound of flutes and pipes and the noise of men." If the man who wrote those words, or, rather, the words of which these are Mr Lang's English prose version, was not Homer, who could he have been ? As for Homer forgetting his own wall, let us remember that Milton in one place makes Adam speak of his mother. Let us be thankful for the beauties of the poets, and not try to rob them of their glory because their poems are not as topographically exact as the drawings of an ordnance survey. We want Homer, the whole Homer, and nothing but Homer, and all the wriggling of the Chorizontes will not destroy our belief in him : not even the learning of Dr Rouse, who is firmly convinced that the Homeric poems "grewed." He contends that Arnold "was mistaken in his sweeping statements about their unity." Perhaps if Arnold were alive he would reply in the words of Cicero : "Si

in hoc erro, libenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem quo delector dum vivo extorqueri volo." But the latest contribution to Choric fantasy is not likely to carry reluctant conviction to anybody. Go through the list of learned paradoxers from Wolf to Fick, and it will be found that each of them has approached the problem with a preconceived theory, and has grubbed through the poems to find matter for its support.

An ounce of tradition is worth a ton of theories, and the testimony of tradition for nearly three thousand years is unwavering. This is a literary question, to be judged on literary evidence by literary criteria. Can the history of the world's literature afford one instance of a supremely great poem evolving itself by a process like that of a snowball rolling down a hill? Let an undoubted case be brought forward before we are asked to believe that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* manufactured themselves out of primitive materials scattered through time and space. Nobody supposes that the poems have come down to us through the ages just as they were composed ; many interpolations must have crept in, and the changes of dialect that occurred between Homer and Alexandrine days no doubt left their marks on the accepted texts. Longinus believed that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were the work of one poet—Homer ; he suggested that the former was the work of his prime, and the latter of his age, and I submit that, in spite of difficulties devised by Teutonic ingenuity, it is more probable such was the case than that the same race, the same language, and approximately

the same age should have produced two or more poets of such transcendently glorious genius.

Newman contended that a good translation of the *Iliad* should affect Englishmen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers. To which Arnold forcibly retorted that the Greeks are dead, and that no one can form the faintest idea of the manner in which they were affected by the recitation of the poem. We know nothing about the pronunciation of the language, save that it most certainly was not pronounced in our traditional manner; and as to the real rhythm of the Greek hexameter, spoken or intoned, we know practically nothing at all. Something of the intellectual effect of the Homeric poems may be felt by a student who saturates his mind with Homer, but as to their purely æsthetic influence—the property, in short, which distinguishes poetry from prose—he can only make conjectures. Newman's criterion therefore falls to the ground, and Arnold, who finds it easier to destroy than to construct, sets up another quite as untenable. A person who cannot read the original cannot, of course, judge the merits of a translation; therefore, says Mr Arnold, you must have recourse to the Provost of Eton, the Master of Balliol, and the Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. If they say that a translation gives them the same feeling that the original gives them, then it is good, otherwise it is bad. But Professor Newman was a very learned Grecian, almost as learned as any of the three personages selected as the court of Homeric appeal, and his mind

was affected by the appellation "O pepon," applied by a warrior to his comrade, as though the former had exclaimed with familiar affection, "O Pippin !" and one of Helen's famous lines of pathetic and sonorous self-reproach affected Mr Newman's mind as though Homer had written, "O brother thou of me who am a mischief-working vixen." It should seem, then, that exact Greek scholarship does not qualify a man to judge the artistic values of poetry ; and, remembering some of the æsthetic dicta of the lamented Dr Jowett, one cannot avoid the suspicion that he might easily have developed views of Homeric translation as eccentric as those of Newman.

The books of criticism on Homer by men are many, but of modern works of the kind I only remember two that are by women—Miss Agnes Clerke's *Familiar Studies in Homer*, and *Homer and the Iliad*, by Miss F. Melian Stawell, of Newnham, and this last work, whether regarded from the standpoint of the student or from that of the literary amateur, is the most delightful of all. Miss Stawell is a learned lady who can encounter the dry-as-dust pedants with their own weapons, but she is, above all, a woman who can know and feel the supreme loveliness of Homer's poetry. It is a good thing to have the recorded opinions of a competent woman on this subject, because many persons share the opinion of a certain critic—whose prejudice was probably more extensive than his knowledge—that the *Iliad* is "just an orgy of bloody noses." Now, this is not the kind of poetry that ladies usually appreciate, and such persons

may learn from Miss Stawell that the *Iliad* contains, besides much ringing and clashing of arms, the sweetest and tenderest verse that ever issued from the human heart. Only a woman, perhaps, can realise the full and crushing force of the argument involved in such a passage as the following, which deals with one of the disputed episodes of the twenty-second book: "He (Hector) rejects the idea of parley with Achilles. 'I cannot talk with him in love and kindness, as youth and maiden talk—as youth and maiden meet by rock and tree, and talk together.' Hector has his death before his eyes; he knows that Achilles is a better man than he; he dare not let himself think of Andromache by name, but, unbidden and half-veiled, a symbol of their love rises and lingers in his heart. The repetition of youth and maiden, though admired by the ancient critics, is considered by some of the moderns as 'a superfluous prettiness hardly suiting the surroundings.' And so, perhaps, we might consider it if we thought the surroundings were limited to xxii." For Homer knew, and Miss Stawell knows, what has been hidden from all the dons and diaskeuasts since Alexandria was built: that Hector was thinking of that moment, on the wall of Troy, which wrung from him a cry of anguish that still re-echoes down the ages: "But me may the heaped-up earth be covering in death ere I hear thy cry as they carry thee into captivity." And Miss Stawell resumes: "The connection between xxii. and vi. is indeed so intimate that M. Croiset, who calls attention to it, holds that vi., though due to a different

poet, was yet written before xxii., and influenced its composition, an admission that comes dangerously near the old jest that Homer was not written by Homer, but by another poet of the same name."

The book contains several delicious feminine touches, such as the passage in which Achilles is rebuked for not letting bygones be bygones when the King of Men offered to restore Briseis. Miss Stawell, of course, does not perceive that the *geras*, the "meed of honour" of Peleus's son, might now be his meed of shame, and that even in those days men did not receive back a stolen mistress like a borrowed umbrella. Another passage which only a woman could have written is the description of Penelope, which many men must have dimly felt without definitely formulating. It is too long to quote in full, but here is part of it: "If she cannot have her true hero she is not averse to the stir of vigorous young life about her, which appears, at least on the surface, to defer to her and to woo her—not averse, that is, so long as it does not call on her for immediate and irretrievable action. She remembers word for word, and with much sentiment, the last loving injunction of Odysseus to take care of his old father and mother, and yet she lets Laertes go away to his farm when his wife dies, and eat out his heart by himself mourning for his son. The only service she can think of doing for him is to make him a winding-sheet, which she has no intention of finishing; and there is a spice of truth in Butler's delicious picture of Laertes's ruefulness on coming to call, and hearing

from Eurycleia that 'her mistress was upstairs working at his pall, but she would be down directly.' And it is very hard to forgive her for not looking after Argus, though, of course, she is the last mistress in the world who would be able to keep 'the careless maidens' up to their work. She is, in short, just the kind of woman who cries herself to sleep in difficulties, and wakes up looking wonderfully plump and fresh." Trust a woman to touch off the outlines of a woman to perfection. Can we not now all see this type of virtuous matron, with her down-drawn lip and mouth with drooping corners, with her professions of wifely devotion, the incarnation of pious ineptitude? And then, what troubles these heroes do make for themselves! Why could not the man of many counsels have remained contentedly with Calypso, who would have given him immortality, or with Nausicaa, a year with whom were worth eternity with any ordinary goddess? The old blind poet knew why, for he had read the hero's heart.

Miss Stawell has an ingenious theory, which she elaborates with much learning. She contends that the original authentic *Iliad* includes by far the greater part of the poem as we know it, and that certain minor episodes, which appear to conflict with the story and the spirit of the poem, have been embroidered into it by later poets or editors. It was a national poem, and the people wished to know something more of some lightly touched incident or character. What more natural, then, than for some popular editor or singer to insert a passage supplying the needed information?

True ; but the theory does not explain the inconsistencies, because such an editor or singer would take remarkably good care that his insertion should conform exactly to the authentic matter of the original, which would be as familiar both to him and to his public as the Gospel of Mark is to a "Theo. Trip." man. Miss Stawell believes that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the work of the same great poet, and she makes short work of the linguistic argument, showing that if you apply the methods of Homeric criticism to Milton you can prove anything you like. She mentions that Jebb calls attention to the fact that in the *Odyssey* there are some new words expressing moral and religious feelings. "Of these," continues Miss Stawell, "three certainly may be admitted as of some importance, the words meaning 'holy,' 'piety,' and 'God-fearing.' The appearance of these in the *Odyssey* has been thought remarkable. But Professor Bradley has given me a curiously close parallel from the changes in Shakspeare's vocabulary. In the plays written during the first half of his literary career the word 'pious' never occurs, while it occurs eleven times in the plays from *Hamlet* onwards." All the quibbles, linguistical, grammatical, and critical, which scholars have invented count for nothing against the irresistible conviction of unity which every true man of letters must feel with regard to these poems. And the objections based on inconsistencies and contradictions rest on the absurd hypothesis that Homer was, like a modern novelist, concerned to make his characters self-consistent and

his occurrences coherent. But these things were no part of his theory of art. If it pleased him to represent the Greeks with a wall one day and without a wall the next, he did so, and his hearers were not surprised or perplexed, and neither need we be. As a matter of fact, Homer worked up a mass of tradition consecrated by religion and hallowed by time ; the contradictions were in the traditions, and the sacrilegious idea of harmonising them no more occurred to him than it did to the writers of the Gospels with regard to the contradictions in the traditions about the Crucifixion. Homer is Homer, and all the philology out of Bedlam will not convince me that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* grew by a process of patchwork.

Section V

Death and Afterwards

“Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.”

Æneid, vi. 314.

THE ART OF DYING

“THE art of dying,” concerning which Miss I. A. Taylor once pleasantly discoursed, is an art that all men must practise, though few care to learn it. In a sense, the whole of life is an exercise of it, for we begin to die the moment we are born. Physiologists describe death as a stage in the process of dissolution ; our bodies are built up, are born, and then immediately begin to waste away, just as a machine, from the time that it begins working until the time that it is broken up for old iron, is in process of wearing out. A great man, in his last moments, is said to have complained that he was “an unconscionably long time a-dying.” Understood in the sense just defined, not many of us would complain of the length of the process. Miss Taylor, writing of the art of dying, accepted the phrase in its common signification ; and she collected a mass of curious and interesting evidence as to the demeanour of all sorts and conditions of men when face to face with the great Destroyer. She came to the conclusion that death “is the occasion *par excellence* when a man is himself. Few men find it worth while to attitudinise upon a death-bed.” In the main this theory is true,

yet it admits of many exceptions. Given a sufficient stimulus, and a man will exhibit, like brave Cobham, a "ruling passion strong in death." The obscure person in the seclusion of his bedchamber may not be tempted to pose. If he can think at all, other emotions are likely to occupy his attention ; probably he is absorbed too much in himself to care for outward appearances. Yet some strong souls have found it possible to act a part until the very moment when, in the words of the dying Rabelais, "the farce is over." Mirabeau, for instance, had his mind's eye fixed upon the weeping multitude beneath his window, when he begged his servant "to raise this head—the most powerful in France," and when he prayed, "Let me die to the sounds of sweet music." His death, in fact, was the final scene of a carefully played drama, and he, assuredly, is not to be blamed if his atrocious torments marred the grace with which he desired the curtain to fall. When Vespasian, however, gasped out, upon his latest breath, that "a prince should die standing," he was not seeking after dramatic effect ; he was one of those men that, whether princes or peasants, always do "die standing." But when the feeble Louis XVIII. expires with the same words upon his lips, we feel that a bundle of buckram and gold lace is trying to persuade the world that it has been a man. Among the cases, on the other hand, that support Miss Taylor's theory of the sincerity of death are those of Collingwood, who, in a temporary rally, exclaimed, "Then I may live to meet the French again," and of that Lord Peterborough who wished to

live in order "to give that rascal (Bishop Burnet) the lie in half his history."

In ages and countries where life is uncertain or fanaticism strong, dying often becomes a trivial incident. The Mussulman rushes through the smoke of battle to the arms of his heavenly houris with the eagerness of a bridegroom ; and, when sheep-stealing was a capital offence, many a man went to the gallows with a smile on his face and a jest on his lips. In public executions, especially of distinguished men, there is always a strong dramatic interest that probably affects the person most concerned. There is a desire to be dignified that sometimes manifests itself in curious fashion. Thus Lord Capell, the Royalist, when on the scaffold, greatly was concerned to know whether it was etiquette to remove his hat while making his last speech. The point of this address, by the way, was an assurance that he died a Protestant, and "in love with the Thirty-nine Articles." Here surely was a man after the heart of Coleridge, who, dying, "hoped that all who heard of his name might know he died in the faith of the Church of England." Out of many examples Miss Taylor drew the comforting conclusion that the majority of persons die with tranquillity and courage. This is not surprising when one reflects that, in the conflict with death, a man in the full possession of his strength and faculties is sustained by a natural pride, while a man prostrated by disease and pain is not in a condition to manifest fear, or perhaps even to feel it. A cynic has said that it is easy to be brave before onlookers, and that to get out of bed

in the dark demands more courage than to lead a forlorn hope. It was before a throng of affrighted Fathers that great Julius gathered his robe round him and laid him down to die, yet none can doubt that, had no eye beheld him, he would have shown the same noble dignity and simplicity. More theatrical were the last words of Augustus, but there is a ring of proper pride in his half-sardonic demand for applause. A great actor has played a great part greatly, and, as the curtain falls, with cheerful confidence he challenges the approval of his audience.

One consideration that must always be present to the mind of a dying person remains to be noticed—namely, hope or fear, or curiosity as to the future. The earliest literary records paint death in colours of unrelieved gloom. Achilles declares that he would rather be the slave of a poor man than a king among the dead, and it is plain that the poet, absorbed in the purely human stress and turmoil of primitive life, cannot conceive as tolerable an existence divorced from the body and from sense. As the mere physical struggle for existence becomes less intense, and as life in itself, apart from its conditions, ceases to be the aim and end of all effort, a change comes over man's attitude towards death, and what was the hated foe of Achilles becomes the last supreme friend of the chorus in *Œdipus*. As yet there is no hope or joy in death, which is merely the end of all things ; and inasmuch as existence is full of sorrow and suffering, inasmuch as not to be born would be the greatest of all blessings, the next best thing is to die. The religious idea, with its more or

less vaguely held doctrine of compensations, appears still later. Socrates furnishes us with one of its first and best illustrations. He believes in a future life, and yet is conscious that the wish may be father to the thought ; but in any case he is happy. A modern scoffer once remarked that the heaven of Socrates suggested to him an everlasting literary and philosophical society, to which Socrates might fairly retort that such a community was at least as interesting as an eternal psalmody class. Observe that the attitude of Socrates is one of philosophical resignation. He does not seek death, but he is contented to die when his time shall come. Religious emotion is carried further by Cicero, who hails with joy the "glorious day" when he shall join the divine company of his lost ones, and shall depart from the mob of earth. He is the first to represent the world by the symbol of an inn, where men lodge for a brief space and then journey home ; and in one of the letters of Seneca this parable is enlarged with singular beauty. We have now reached the point where pagan gropings after truth end and the full light of revelation begins. Under a happier dispensation, careless confidence, born of ignorance, has given place to a blessed recognition of the gravity of the issues of life and death. No longer can the hereafter be approached with the serene indifference of Socrates, and this lesson is brought home to us by the death-bed of our English Socrates, Dr Johnson. As the end approached, his anxieties increased, and the clergyman to whom he confided them endeavoured to soothe him by

inquiring, "What do you mean by damned?" The answer was prompt and emphatic, "Sent to hell and punished everlastingly." Compared with the strenuous faith of Johnson, how feeble appears the theology of Lord Eldon, whose last words were, "It matters not where I am going, whether the weather be cold or hot."

THE HOUR OF DEATH

"Non dolet Pete," said Arria, as she showed the path of honour and of death to her spouse, whose footsteps were faltering; and saying it she answered a question which men with shrinking dread have asked their secret souls ever since the world began. "Does it hurt?"—the thought creeps into every man's mind sometimes in spite of himself, and he hastens to banish it. Someone has said that human beings always think and act as if there were no death, and that otherwise life would be unendurable. But this can hardly be true of any save the very young and very strong and healthy; to persons that have passed middle life every day's experience brings inevitable intimations of the end. When that which drew from out the boundless deep has turned again home, the thoughtful man can hardly hear a youth exclaim, "In twenty years I shall have done such a thing," or "be such a thing," without a passing pang of remembrance. Twenty years! a little span, but to him boundless as eternity, for long before its days are accomplished he will have been carried over the irremeable wave, beyond our bourne of time and

place. Perhaps, then, an unwelcome wonder possesses him : "How, in what shape, will it come to me ?" and the eternal question, "Doletne ?" is whispered past the barrier of his teeth. Notice that the fear which is the heritage of man that is born of woman is of dying, not of death ; and our common phrase "the fear of death" is meaningless and absurd. Nobody fears death ; why should one ? To the religious man it is the gate of life, the portal of everlasting felicity, which he daily approaches with sure and certain hope. To the philosopher, from whom such consoling faith has been withheld, it is a natural doom to be contemplated with composure. To the man of ordinary intelligence, it is the common lot of the human race, unfortunate, perhaps unpleasant, but an incident which must never be allowed to hamper the activity or to darken the pleasure of a healthy, rational life. To be afraid of death after one has read the *Apology* of Socrates is almost impossible. If it be the end of individual consciousness, that is the end of the whole matter, and fear is foolishness ; if individual consciousness survive, then the man who here was master of his soul remains the master still ; otherwise he would not be himself but some other ; being himself he may bide the shocks of eternity as he confronted those of time, "Greet the unseen with a cheer, Strive and thrive ! cry Speed—fight on, fare ever, There as here." And if men endure beyond the grave, and remain themselves, then death is an introduction to the most glorious human society. Would it be nothing to hear the voice of

Orpheus and Musæus, of Hesiod and Homer, to look upon the face of Palamedes and Ajax the son of Telamon, to speak with him who led that great host against Troy? Who is there that would not cry with Socrates, "I indeed would be willing to die many times if this were true"?

Death, then, is not feared by mortal men, but dying—the act itself is feared. We are far less troubled by speculation as to what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, than by dread that the actual shuffling may prove an excruciating process. A writer of weird fascination, who over the letters F.R.C.S. discussed "*Hora Mortis Nostræ*," pointed out that the hymn "*Rock of Ages*" was once marred by the atrocious, intolerable line, "When mine eye-strings crack in death," and this ghastly idea of the act of dying is, says the writer, at the back of the minds of many people. But is there any good reason to suppose that dying is an unpleasant sensation? There is no general and conclusive evidence, but such testimony as can be had and such inferences as can safely be drawn are worth considering. Dying is a unique and very brief experience; it is a much less important part of our lives than our daily dinners, but sooner or later it comes to every living thing, and it is well that we should find out all we can about it before we endure it. So far as we know, we only die once; a tooth can only be pulled out once, and what we ask as we sit down in the dentist's chair is, "Will it hurt much?" When we contemplate death, it is equally natural to ask,

“Will it hurt?” The evidence of dying persons is not very plentiful and not very trustworthy ; few men and women at the moment of death—if there is such a definite moment, which is extremely doubtful—are able to make known their sensations, and many recorded “last words” were uttered long before the actual act of dying began. But such testimony as there is suggests that dying is not unpleasant. What it is to those who go with great suddenness, struck by lightning, with a bullet through the brain, or by the failure of a valve of the heart, we cannot possibly tell. When it comes as the consequence of old age or of debilitating disease, or when it befalls in a moment of ecstatic exaltation, it is at least painless and, according to some witnesses, pleasant. We know that Arria’s self-inflicted death-wound did not hurt, and there is plentiful and, on the whole, satisfactory testimony that the torments of the faggot and the stake were bliss to many a dying martyr. This is a mystery, the key whereto may be discovered in some despised and neglected bypath of psychology. There are witnesses also who speak of the painlessness of dying under ordinary conditions. Fontenelle’s last words were, “I suffer nothing, but feel a sort of difficulty in living longer.” Louis XIV. said, “I thought dying had been harder.” The great Dr Hunter murmured with his last breath, “If I had the strength to hold a pen, I would write down how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die.” Schiller experienced, or thought he experienced, a process of intellectual stimulation, for

his dying words were, "Many things are growing plain and clear to my understanding." Indeed, in all the list of last words which literature has preserved, and probably in the experience of most men and women who have often stood at a death-bed side, there is a remarkable absence of any suggestion of distress or anxiety or pain at the moment of death, whatever there may have been in the previous struggle with disease.

"F.R.C.S.," in his remarkable essay, advances several new and consoling thoughts. He quotes Sir James Paget, who made the suggestion that "death as a natural act is probably not unaccompanied with the kind of sense of ease or satisfaction which generally accompanies such acts." Upon this "F.R.C.S." shrewdly remarks that we do not know enough about death to call it an act, or to assign to it a moment, and that all the paths of sense when a man dies seem to be utterly impenetrable alike to pain and to pleasure. The essayist, as his diploma would indicate, has often observed the effects of anæsthetics upon others, and, as a patient, has often watched their effect upon himself. He proposes to us that death is the twin brother of the sleep of chloroform or ether; that the sensation of departing consciousness under an anæsthetic is similar to that of the loss of consciousness in death. A patient submitting himself to an anæsthetic experiences a distinct pleasure of surrender; all worry and anxiety disappear; care of himself has passed from his own hands into those of others; he has nothing to do but

to go to sleep. Then the senses in their order leave him one by one ; first hearing, next sight, and next touch. "Last of all comes, or may come, a moment when the patient is conscious of one fact still left standing—that he is he. At that moment, if he be of a logical turn of mind, he may expect that he will now get behind the veil, see things as they are in themselves, contemplate pure Being, stand before the *merum Ens* of his philosophy." So in death, as in anæsthesia, says "F.R.C.S.," we may be almost sure that we can observe the gradual and orderly obliteration of the senses, and that at the end there comes a point of time when the dying man is conscious of himself alone, and of nothing but himself. The odd noises and restless movements which so often look like pain, and are so painful to watch, are exactly the same as those which are caused by anæsthetics, and must not be interpreted in terms of ordinary life. "Long ago the ways of the senses, one after another, were shut and sealed. The last beats of the heart, the last movements of respiration have no meaning, and convey no message ; there is nothing left in the body that can receive, decipher, and translate any impulse of sensation. Then a very slight and quiet change passes over the look of the face, and there is an end."

PERSONALITY AND ITS SURVIVAL

The huge posthumous book of Mr F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*

(Longmans), is a most pathetic production. The work of a man of genius and of irresistible personal charm, it is only a monument of wasted years. Mr Myers, with almost miraculous patience and industry, collected great stores of material related, as he supposed, to the problem of the nature of human personality and of its possible survival of death. The task, unfinished when he died, is embodied in thirteen hundred pages, containing stories, theories, and speculations about the supernormal, genius, hysteria, lunacy, hypnotism, trance, clairvoyance, and ghosts; and out of this welter of extravagance the author would have us to believe he has deduced some scientific proof of the existence of a future life. His book was prepared for publication by Dr Hodgson and Miss Alice Johnson, and in a number of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research Miss Johnson unconsciously pronounced poor Myers's condemnation. She writes: "The strongest evidence ever adduced for the belief in communion with the dead has been furnished by Mrs Piper"! Was ever unintended irony more terrible. This, then, is the crown of a life of psychical research, that our scientific conviction of a future life must ultimately depend upon the grotesque performances of an American servant-girl, upon the incoherent maundering of "Phinuit" and "Rector," this woman's supposed "controls"! Having quoted the words of Odysseus at the side of the blood-filled trench, Mr Myers remarks: "In such fashion, through Mrs Piper's trances, the thronging multitude of the departed press to the glimpse of light. Eager

but untrained they interject their uncomprehended cries; vainly they call the names which no man answers; like birds that have beaten against a lighthouse, they pass in disappointment away." The case of Mrs Piper and kindred cases, Mr Myers categorically asserts, prove, first, "persistence of the spirit's life as a structural law of the universe"; secondly, "that between the spiritual and the material world an avenue of communication does, in fact, exist"; and thirdly, "that the surviving spirit retains, at least in some measure, the memories and the loves of earth." In the aforementioned *Proceedings*, two learned researchers, Mr Carrington and Professor Hyslop, strenuously dispute whether the Piper phenomena are produced by telepathy or by the agency of spirits. Their papers are followed by a merciless exposure of this notorious medium by Mr Frank Podmore, the greatest living authority on the subject of spiritualism. He says: "The whole history of spiritualism and psychical research should convince us that we are never entitled to assume the honesty of the medium. We know at once too much and too little of mediumship. Too much, for we know that almost every type of mediumship has been connected with dishonesty in the past; too little, for if there are honest mediums we don't know by what signs to distinguish them from dishonest ones." With reference to the persons who believe in Mrs Piper, Mr Podmore drily remarks: "Psychologists tell us that in perceptive processes inadequate and ambiguous stimuli are peculiarly apt to give rise to hallucination; or, in

other words, faint sights and sounds are liable to be interpreted according to the wishes or beliefs of the percipient; and the same law appears to hold good when we are dealing, not with sensations, but with ideas. History supplies us with abundant examples of elaborate theories constructed out of material sufficiently vague and indeterminate to allow wide latitude of interpretation."

These sentences of Mr Podmore have a special application to the researches of Mr Myers. No one can dispute the enormous importance of the subject he investigated, or the great interest of the phenomena he described. His fault was an incurable propensity for constructing elaborate theories out of vague and indeterminate material. He overflowed with ideas and theories about an unconscious consciousness of his own invention, about telepathy, about spirit manifestations; but he failed to produce any satisfactory evidence that such things are. For instance, one grows weary and even angry with long and ingenious speculations as to whether some statement of the entranced Mrs Piper was the result of thought-reading or of spirit communication, when there is no evidence, in the first place, that Mrs Piper ever made the statement; and, in the second place, that, if she did, she did not get her information through ordinary channels. And in any case these matters are of little importance. The secrets of life and death will never be won by morbid psychology. Life is in all of us, and, in the present state of science, we all must die. The normal and not the abnormal

subject is the proper field for studying what life is and what death is. The discovery will not be made amid the tomfooleries of the séance, out of the weird insight of hysteria, or through the babblings of the madhouse. When it comes it will flash suddenly from the physical laboratory. Perhaps the way to life—life absolute—lies through the study of death. We talk with shuddering glibness of death, but who knows what death is, and when it happens? It is not the cessation of the heart's action; there are myriads of living things without hearts at all; a man's heart stops when he faints, and, conversely, the beating of the human heart was recently observed to persist several hours after what we call death had taken place. It is not the stoppage of breath, for persons who have been immersed in water for long periods have frequently been restored to life and consciousness. These are some of the mysteries that men of science, by scientific methods, are to-day attacking, and from them alone can we hope to gain any knowledge of what life is, and whether, apart from the conviction of faith, there is ground to believe that individual life can survive the shock of physical dissolution.

But morbid psychology, though of no use in solving the problems to which Mr Myers addressed himself, is an important study. Mr Myers's chapter on genius, for instance, is most interesting and significant. It can hardly be denied that in rare cases mental faculties exist that are latent or non-existent in the ordinary individual. Only by some such supposition can we account for the calculating prodigies—usually children—that appear

from time to time. Among these have been famous men, such as Ampère, Gauss, and Archbishop Whately ; others were Mr Bidder, father of the late Mr Bidder, Q.C., and the two Blyths, of Edinburgh. In almost all cases the faculty ceases after the early years of childhood ; Mr Bidder, Mr Blyth, and Dase are the only known instances to the contrary. Mr Bidder could all through life tell the logarithm of any number to seven or eight places, and if given any number not a prime would at once mention its factors. He was a man of very high intelligence, but he never could discover the processes by which his mind arrived at its results ; all he could say was that the answers came by a sort of instinct. Mr Blyth, the well-known civil engineer of Edinburgh, had similar powers, though he found his quickness and to some extent his accuracy of intuition to be diminished in the process of years. Dase was little removed from imbecility ; he could never learn the rudiments of mathematics or a word of any language but his own. Yet the Academy of Sciences at Hamburg kept him on a salary to do mathematical calculations for them. In twelve years he made tables of factors and prime numbers for the seventh and nearly the whole of the eighth million, a task which, as Mr Myers well observes, the quickest normal mathematician could hardly have performed in a lifetime. Mangiamale, aged ten, examined by Arago before the French Academy, in a minute and a half mentally extracted the cube root of 3,796,416. In less than a minute he solved the cubic equation involved in the question :

“What number satisfies the condition that its cube plus five times its square is equal to forty-two times itself plus forty?” In a very brief time he calculated mentally the tenth root of 282,475,249, a feat quite beyond the powers of most persons without the aid of logarithms. His method of arriving at his solutions was never discovered. Such phenomena as these are well worth studying, since they point to the fact that there may be faculties and processes of mind unknown to the average man; but one cannot think that such a study has any relation to the problem of the survival of death by the human personality.

MR LANG AND GHOSTS

There is a problem which is likely to exercise the minds of learned literary triflers a hundred years hence. It is, “Did Andrew Lang believe in ghosts?” If Mr Lang unbeknown to himself could be raised up again in the next century, he would to a dead certainty discover the subject, and write a most delightful book upon it, at the end of which the reader would know many things he never knew before, but would remain in deeper doubt than at the beginning as to whether Andrew Lang believed in ghosts. The Langs of the future will doubtless write many volumes based on the evidence which abounds in the literature of our time, and the result will be quite inconclusive. Mr Lang has written books and numberless essays and notes on spooks, and leaves us bewildered to determine whether

he writes in earnest or with his tongue in his cheek ; whether he is a sincere psychical researcher, or is with inimitable slyness poking fun at his fellow-inquirers. Possibly if Mr Lang were put upon his oath he would admit that he does not know himself. For my own part, if the question, "Does Andrew Lang believe in ghosts?" were put to me, and I were compelled under threat of capital punishment to give a definite answer, I should say, "No, but he'd like to." This reply would, at any rate, represent the general impression produced by his essays in spookology.

In *Longman's Magazine* Mr Lang some years ago gave us a tasty little dish from the late F. W. H. Myers's great feast, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. Mr Lang is always at his very best when discussing the theories of his lamented friend ; he is sympathetic and respectful, but here and there crops up a little phrase which seems to indicate that he is enjoying himself at the expense of that solemn enthusiast. For instance, he remarks : "Mr Myers believed in 'possession,' but not in demoniacal possession ; only invasions by human spirits. His theory had no use for devils, and this, I think, made him rather unfair to that order of beings. The evidence for them at present is mainly that of Chinese and Yakuts and converted Zulus, which excites an unworthy prejudice." I give it up ; the Gowrie mystery is child's play compared with the mystery of Andrew Lang. Several of Mr Myers's stories are related with evident relish by Mr Lang. He tells of a Mr Wilkie,

chief of the Secret Service Department at Washington, who went to sleep in the consulting-room of Dr de Wolf in South Kensington. There he dreamed that he had a writing-pad on his knee, and that he wrote in pencil: "Dear Doctor,—Do you remember Kitty M'Guire, who used to live with you in Chester (Mass.)? She died in 1872. She hopes you are having a good time in London." When Mr Wilkie woke he gave the message to the doctor, who at once remembered Kitty as one of his mother's maids. Mr Wilkie had never been within five hundred miles of Chester, Mass., and had never heard of Miss M'Guire. Mr Lang offers several possible explanations: First, that the story is fiction, which is my solution; second, that Kitty really sent the message, which is Mr Myers's; third, that the dream was a strange coincidence; and, fourth, that it was the result of some telepathic influence, which Mr Lang seems inclined to adopt.

He also quotes a story supplied by himself to Mr Myers, of a young Scottish artisan, named Andrew, who while entranced was wont to be possessed by a Russian physician named Snobinski. Now, Andrew in his normal state went one better than Shakspeare, for he knew no Greek. But on a certain occasion, under the influence of Snobinski, he wrote down the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth lines of the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*. "The words were beautifully written, and minute even to the accents." I would commend to Mr Lang's notice a little critical point in favour of Snobinski which he seems to have overlooked. The

participle in the latter line, according to the MSS., is that of *eimi* (*sum*), while, according to a scholium adopted by modern editors, it should be that of *eimi* (*ibo*). Now, Snobinski, who as a Russian doctor could not be expected to own a "Merry and Riddel," duly wrote *eon*, thereby affording circumstantial yet impressive evidence of his *bona-fides*, the force of which every psychical researcher will perceive. If Andrew had been a fraud he would have crammed the lines from a Pitt Press edition, and have written *ion*, thus "giving the show away." I trust that in any future discussion of the case Mr Lang will direct his best consideration to this point.

THE MYSTERY OF DANIEL HOME

Confronted by the "strange case of Daniel Dunglas Home," the superior literary person will ejaculate, "Mr Sludge!" and the man in the street will say, "Medium—impostor!" and pass by perfectly satisfied with himself. I also believe that the probabilities are thousands to one in favour of the imposture theory; but then Home remains almost a greater mystery than ever. He claimed to possess supernatural powers, and the evidence in favour of his claim is a great deal stronger than that upon which some of the principal religions in the world repose. The character of the witnesses and the definite precision of their statements are most impressive. I do not put much reliance on the evidence of Sir David Brewster and Sir William

Crookes, although it requires some assurance to brush aside their statements. But the truth is that scientific men are apt to be donkeys when they meddle with such matters. Far more weighty is the evidence of Alphonse Karr, one of the hardest-headed men in Europe ; Lord Brougham, a person qualified, if ever anybody was, to investigate and to weigh evidence ; and Mr Hamilton Aidé, an accomplished man of the world, and a good amateur conjurer.

Remarkable as is the strength of the evidence in favour of Home's genuineness, it is less remarkable than the weakness of the evidence against it. Even Mr Podmore, who has easily demolished all the rest of the mediums, comes off second best in his encounter with Home, and is reduced to plead that as Home never took money for his sittings, and as you can't look a gift horse in the mouth, the precautions taken at his séances were probably insufficient ; and he audaciously suggests that, as Slade and other mediums were detected in fraud, we must in the case of Home "recognise that there were opportunities for trickery, though it might be of little profit now to speculate on the precise methods employed." Anyhow, Home was never detected in fraud, though he freely challenged the keenest wits of Europe ; and such men as Canon Tylor, Dr Wallace, and Professor Balfour Stewart could only suggest that Home's audiences must be hypnotised, or in some other way hallucinated. Only one contemporary charge of fraud against Home exists, and that is a very hesitating one. Mr Merrifield, the mathema-

tician, recording a séance in 1855, wrote that he thought there was light enough to detect an object resembling a child's hand with a long white sleeve attached to it fastened to Home's shoulder, and moving as Home moved. But this was one of the few occasions when Home gave sittings in the dark, and if the darkness was sufficient to give him an opportunity for fraud, it was also sufficient to make Mr Merrifield's observation imperfect. The Browning story is absurd. It runs that at a sitting Home exhibited to Mr and Mrs Browning the phantasm of an infant of theirs, and that Browning seized the phantasm, which proved to be Home's naked foot. Mrs Browning's account of the sitting mentions no such incident, and Browning himself never said anything about it during her lifetime, if he did afterwards, which seems to be doubtful. An extraordinary exhibition of worthless evidence was afforded by Sir David Brewster, who, in June 1855, attended one of Home's séances, and in the following September wrote to the *Morning Advertiser* to say he was convinced that all he saw could be done by human hands and feet; that he might have discovered the method if he had been permitted to lift the cloth and examine the table. He denied that the table moved in a mysterious way, or that any bell rang without contact. This was three months after the séance.

But Sir David, in June, a few days after the séance, wrote a letter to his family describing it, and this letter was included in his published correspondence by Mrs Gordon, his daughter and biographer. In it Sir David

stated that the sitters were Lord Brougham, Serjeant Cox, Home, and himself ; that they were permitted to examine the table ; that "the table actually rose from the ground when no hand was upon it" ; that another and heavier table acted in the same way ; that an accordeon held in Brougham's hand played of itself ; that a bell lying on the carpet rang "when nothing could have touched it," and subsequently "came over to me and placed itself in my hand." He ended by saying : "We could give no explanation of these experiments, and could not conjecture how they could be produced by any kind of mechanism." This inexplicable self-contradiction by one of the greatest men of science is enough of itself to make the case of Home remarkable. About the evidence of Alphonse Karr and Mr Aïdé there is no ambiguity. They declare that at the villa of a Russian lady at Nice they saw, in Home's presence, in a brilliantly lighted room, a ponderous rosewood table, that the strongest man on earth could not have lifted, float a yard high in the air while the circle stood round it with their hands on top. Alphonse Karr slipped down on the floor and crawled about under the table on his hands and knees, satisfying himself that no one was touching it ; a careful examination was made, which proved that the table was not pulled up by ropes or wires, and it remained suspended for fully two minutes. Then chairs standing against the walls began to rush about the polished floor with great velocity. Sir William Crookes asserts that in his own dining-room once, when Home entered, a big easy-chair ran

across the floor to meet him. There is also the evidence of quite a hundred persons that they with their own eyes saw Home rise from the ground and float in the air, and many of these were persons of intellectual eminence. For my own part I am content to disbelieve the evidence on the ground of inherent improbability, and to assume that there was a mistake somewhere. And yet some of the indisputable things in Home's life are hardly less marvellous. For instance, he, a Scotch peasant without money, good looks, or personal charm, married in succession two of the bluest-blooded ladies in Russia, and married them with the explicit consent of the Czar. If we are to go by evidence, a hundred men have floated in the air for every one who, with the connivance of the Czar, has broken through the social barriers of the Russian nobility.

MRS PIPER AND OTHER MEDIUMS

The elusive world of shadows round us has a tricky fascination for the children of men ; great and small peer wistfully across its borders, but never comes the divine permission,

“*Pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.*”

Baffled, one generation fades away, and another with eager hope springs up to attack the problem. Different ages have different methods of approaching the subject ; in our own time, when science is supreme, a number of eminent men have imagined that, by careful examination of certain obscure and doubtful phenomena, a clue

to the world's great riddle may be found. Hence we have the numerous publications of the Society for Psychical Research, and very many books dealing with kindred topics, such as *Mrs Piper and the Society for Psychical Research*, translated from the French of M. Sage by Noralie Robertson, with a preface by Sir Oliver Lodge ; and *Spiritualism*, issued in the "Pro and Con" series, in which Mr Wake Cook states the case for spiritualism and Mr Frank Podmore marshals a most deadly indictment against it. Importance is lent to the former volume by the imprimatur of Sir Oliver Lodge, whose arguments and theories, even respecting Mrs Piper, deserve respectful consideration. This declaration, however, like earlier ones on the same subject, is robbed, so I submit, of scientific importance by the persistent postulates that "the hypothesis of fraud is entirely inapplicable" to Mrs Piper's case, and that what is called telepathy must be accepted as an established fact. In science that hypothesis is best which explains the largest body of facts and is not inconsistent with any ascertained fact. Regarding Mrs Piper, I do not hesitate to say that the hypothesis of fraud is sufficient to account for most of the facts within our knowledge, and is certainly not inconsistent with any of them. Once more one has to complain that in this book, as elsewhere, the important circumstance is concealed that for many years she had been the paid medium of the American society ; she being represented as a person to whom "praise and warm gratitude" are due for having "lent herself

to the investigations with perfect good faith and pliability."

The phenomena associated with Mrs Piper are quite insignificant compared with certain other phenomena as to the occurrence of which there is an astounding body of evidence. In the "fifties" and "sixties" of the last century some of the most illustrious men of England, France, and America voluntarily recorded personal experiences beside which the greatest marvel of the psychical researchers is trumpery and commonplace. In this band we find the names of Thackeray, Trollope, De Morgan, Russel Wallace, Crookes, Gully, S. C. Hall, William Howitt, Nassau Senior, Whately, Burton, Robert Chambers, Challis, and others. Thackeray published in *Cornhill* the first printed account of Home's performances, and when reproached for doing so declared that at a dinner party he had seen "the large and heavy dinner table covered with decanters, glasses, and a complete dessert rise fully two feet from the ground," and that "no possible jugglery was or could have been employed." De Morgan has left on record that at a friend's house, when no paid medium was present, a circle of members of the family and friends stood round a large, heavy table without touching it, and the table moved about the room and playfully squeezed a man who was leaning against the back of the sofa until he shouted. Dr Wallace made a cage of hoops, in which he put a table so that those standing round it could not touch it with their feet; when the circle put their hands on the top and near the centre the table

rose a foot or eighteen inches from the floor, where it remained suspended for about a quarter of a minute, resisting attempts to press it down. This experiment, he writes, was "many times repeated by me, and I am satisfied of the correctness of my statement of the facts." Mr C. F. Varley declared he had seen in broad daylight a small table move ten feet with no one near it but himself, and untouched by him. If these things happened, it is useless for the psychical researchers to discuss whether Eusapia Palladino has or has not displaced a water-bottle a few inches without contact.

But greater wonders are to follow. Some mediums claim to accomplish the penetration of matter, and to bring flowers from a distance through the walls of a closed room. But Dr Wallace, describing a séance by Mrs Guppy, says: "A friend of mine asked for a sunflower, and one six feet high fell upon the table, having a large mass of earth about the roots." Chief Justice Edmonds (U.S.A.) had a daughter who developed "mediumistic" powers. In her normal state she only spoke American and a little boarding-school French, but when entranced she spoke "in nine or ten different tongues, often for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native." Now, Mrs Piper is sometimes possessed by the spirit of Dr Phinuit, who, according to himself, was a French physician, born at Marseilles; the spirit of the doctor did not know the Latin names of any drugs and could not recognise the simplest medicinal herbs, and his knowledge of French was limited to one or two simple phrases. When

challenged on this ignorance of his native language, "he explained that it was due to his having lived for some years in Metz, where there were many English residents"! Miss Edmonds's familiars were much better linguists than Mrs Piper's. Finally, Sir William Crookes has recorded with his own pen that Miss Cook, the medium, stayed in his house for a week, and that a spirit form continually appeared; that he saw the medium and the spirit at the same time; that he clasped the spirit form in his arms, and found it as substantial as a living woman; that he measured it, and found it half a head taller than Miss Cook; that he took several photographs of it, and was photographed beside it; that the figure, after being seen, felt, conversed with, and photographed, absolutely disappeared from a small room from which there was no means of exit except through an adjoining room filled with spectators. On these statements I have no observations to offer except that, if psychical influences like sunspots have cyclical periods, the sixties must have been a maximum period, since the Society for Psychical Research have never been able to discover any wonders comparable with those which happened then. As bearing upon the question of evidence, I would call attention to the accounts by Mr Wake Cook and Mr Podmore of the trial of Frau Rothe, the Berlin flower-producing medium. Both agree that the lady was in the habit of buying from the florists the flowers that appeared at her séances. Mr Cook contends that as she never pretended to create flowers, but only to

spirit them through the walls of rooms, this is evidence of her honesty. He does not mention, however, and Mr Podmore does, that when seized by the police she had quite a collection of flowers concealed beneath her garments. It is such little divergences of testimony that make psychical research so difficult for an outsider. Perhaps the best-attested story of mediumship is the "levitation" of Home out of the window of one room and into the window of the next. Sir F. C. Burnand in his memoirs gives a diagram of the two windows ; they make an acute angle with one another, and though to spring from one sill to another would require a good deal of nerve, it could be done. What happened was this :—Home went into room A, which was empty, and the persons in room B heard the sound of the window being pushed up ; a moment afterwards they saw Home standing on the window-sill of room B, and heard him tapping at the window, which they opened, and he stepped in. There was no light in either room except what was supplied by a new moon. These are the facts on which reposes the best-attested legend of "levitation" to be found in the literature of spiritualism.

The forty-first volume of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research contains a verbatim report of Dr Hyslop's sittings with Mrs Piper, and a descriptive and explanatory narrative of them from his pen, and both give melancholy proof of the ease with which a man of scholarship may befooled himself. A few extracts will show the pertinacity of Dr Hyslop in dis-

covering spirits. Through Mrs Piper he asked a "control," whose identity was doubtful, "When did you pass out?" and received the answer, "Only a long time ago." Upon which he sapiently observes: "This would be true of both my mother and brother, while the 'only' might be interpreted as a word from the message, 'Only a short time ago,' of someone else, possibly my father." So the ghosts were right anyhow. The spirit of his father asked him if he remembered Uncle Charles. Now, unfortunately, he never had an uncle of that name; but, continues this amazing logician, "it all at once dawned on me that 'Uncle Charles' was a mistake for 'Uncle Carruthers,' who had died about a month previously. The relevancy of the passage is, therefore, evident." The force of this "therefore" is sublime. Two little extracts are worth giving. The speaker is the ghost of Mr Hyslop père; the interpolations by "S." (for self) are the words of the professor. The latter had inquired what the former died of, and the conversation ran: "Yes, I know now. Yes, my stomach. (S.: Yes, was there anything else the matter?) Yes, stomach, liver, and head. (S.: Very well; tell all about it)." The ghost grew incoherent, but proceeded after a while: "Sounds like Bone. . . . Think I am finding it hard to breathe. . . . My heart, James . . . my heart, James . . . difficult to breathe. Do you remember how I used to breathe? (S.: Yes, father, you are on the right line now.) Yes, I think it was my heart which troubled me most, and my lung. Stomach and heart." It will be

noticed that the spirit had had a shot at most of the parts of his late earthly tabernacle, yet he failed to touch the spot, for Hyslop, senior, actually died of cancer in the throat ; yet the dutiful son records all this clumsy nonsense as of strong evidential value. On another occasion the professor requested the old gentleman to mention a medicine which he had brought to him on his death-bed. The spirit promptly speculated "quin," but, gathering that quinine was wrong, announced that it began with a D. Again scenting failure, the wily sprite declared he knew the name very well, but could not say it when he wanted to. After some coaxing, he ventured on "snut" and "serris," which might have been developed into strychnine or arsenic had either happened to be right. But neither was right, and then the pertinacious ghost declared it was "hime" or "hume," and all Professor Hyslop's doubts vanished, for he had actually brought to his dying father a medicine called Hyomei. These are two fair samples of the "evidence" by which Professor Hyslop proves to his own satisfaction the honesty of Mrs Piper and the existence of disembodied spirits.

EUSAPIA PALADINO

Many years ago in an English Midland town there was an old gentleman whose life had been a strange chapter of romance. When a young fellow he had been a famous conjurer, and he had also practised a little thimble-rigging, and betting, and other of the

useful arts whereby the material plethora of fools is reduced to their spiritual advantage. One evening, returning from a race meeting at which his operations had been more than usually successful, moved by curiosity, he turned into a "rangers'" meeting. The rangers were the sect which ultimately developed into the Salvation Army. There and then the conjurer was converted; from that moment till his death he never tasted alcohol, never made a bet, and never attended a race meeting. He threw away his cards, and applied for work in a factory, where his extraordinary dexterity and iron endurance, in those days before trades unions, soon brought him to the front, and at the time with which this story is concerned he was a comparatively rich man with a large business. And he made the acquaintance of a little chap of about eight, a child full of an unsatiable, round-eyed curiosity to learn "what makes the wheels go round." The pair took a great fancy to one another, and spent many happy hours together. And the old man would impart to the child scraps of his worldly wisdom, and at last, as a special proof of his regard—for he was sensitive about his past and never spoke of it—he began, to the little fellow's ecstatic delight, to teach him small feats of white magic. Sometimes they would go off together to a conjuring performance at the public hall, and afterwards would sit over the fire and discuss "how it was done." Finally, the old man taught the child the trick which had been his *pièce de résistance*. Like all great tricks, it was very simple and rather silly. It consisted in

picking up a card under the nose of your victim, and dropping several others in its place, while you looked him squarely in the eyes and said, "You are quite sure I cannot touch the cards?" And the answer always came, "I am quite sure." When the substitution was completed you said, "You are positive I have not touched the cards?" And the victim would reply, "I am positive." One day the child pulled off the trick at the expense of his master, for it is of the essence of such feats that they deceive the very elect who know quite well how they are done. The old man's quaint, gnarled face broke into an approving smile as he said, "Well done, sonny; well done! Now, take an old man's advice. Play that trick as often as you like on a philosopher or even on an old conjurer, but never try it on with a schoolboy." Of course, the pupil forgot this wise advice, and once he did try it on with a comrade two years older than himself. But the schoolboy did not do the trick properly; he did not say, "I am quite sure." He caught the conjurer by the collar and shook him, crying, "Why, you impudent little beggar, you're touching them all the time!" and there was an end of the wonderful trick.

I thought of this little incident many times while reading M. Camille Flammarion's long and rather heavy book, *Mysterious Psychic Forces*. M. Flammarion is always quite sure that the medium cannot touch, and as his medium is the discredited Eusapia Paladino, his conviction testifies rather to the strength of his faith than to the keenness of his observation. The great

astronomer is a very candid witness : he records things that tell against his theories as well as those that tell for it. For instance, he publishes some photographs of the "levitation" of a table which reveal the fact that the crafty medium is tilting and lifting the table, and actually turning to her assistance the struggles of the learned savants who are supposed to be holding her hands and legs. In one case she appears to be receiving the conscious help of one of the sitters. M. Flammarion, wiser than many of his brother savants, entirely rejects the spiritualistic hypothesis ; but he is convinced of the existence of some mysterious force under the operation of which matter can free itself from the attraction of gravitation. He says, "Let us call it, if you please, telekinesis," or, as his printer puts it for him, "telekinetsis." And all the time he is looking for telekinesis when he ought to be watching Eusapia's toe. I do not for a moment suggest that there is no such thing as telekinesis, or telepathy, or levitation, or any other of the mysterious influences and manifestations that psychic researchers invite us to accept. But I do say, with the most positive conviction, that no such hypothesis is needed to explain the manifestations of Eusapia Paladino, who simply practises on the egregious innocence of very learned men and their strange incapacity to observe and report trivial things correctly. Let Eusapia be watched by half a dozen small boys instead of by as many professors of the Academy of Sciences, and I guarantee that her table will never rise this side of Judgment Day.

M. Flammarion seems to be blind to the significance of the fact that in all these experiments no object was ever moved which was beyond the reach of the medium, and that nothing was ever done which might not have been done by simple trickery. M. Gustave Le Bon contrived to put a light behind the medium, the existence of which she did not suspect, and watched her disengage her hand from control and give some of those taps and knocks which are supposed to be produced by mysterious emanations from her body, but are really caused by her rustic fist. M. Le Bon reported to M. Flammarion that "in my opinion everything in these experiments is fraud." M. Flammarion's accomplished coadjutor, M. Antoniadi, sent him a most pathetic report, well knowing the wound he was inflicting on his chief, in which he said: "I assure you, on my word of honour, that my watchful, silent attitude convinced me beyond all manner of doubt that everything is fraudulent from the beginning to the end." Yet M. Flammarion is still on the lookout for telekinesis. Eusapia can increase at will the weight of an object lying on an ordinary spring letter scale. She has been caught doing this by means of a long hair plucked from her head and stretched across the scale, and now she sometimes challenges her watchers to discover a hair. Well, there are at least half a dozen dodges for doing this silly little trick, and Eusapia must be a duffer indeed if she has not found out three or four of them by this time. All I know is that the theory of telekinesis is not wanted. Indeed, I should say that

the ease with which Eusapia has humbugged some of the most learned scientific men in the world was a greater miracle than anything else she is reported to have done, were I not able to recall the sagacious, crinkling old face of the ex-conjurer, and the bland irony of his Midland brogue as he said : " Let us pray for an audience of professors, sonny ; but may the Lord deliver us from an audience of schoolboys ! "

THE PROBLEM

A good many years ago a group of men round a smoke-room fire were discussing the subject of ghosts. One of them said that the general experience of mankind tended to prove that ghosts do not exist. A famous man of science who was present quietly observed that the general experience of mankind tends to prove that ghosts do exist, and that no hypothesis is better supported by evidence than the hypothesis of the existence of ghosts. A little reflection will show that the man of science was right. The majority of men have never seen a ghost, but that is no ground for disbelief. The majority of men never drew thirteen trumps in one hand, or played eighteen holes in sixty-nine strokes, or wrote a *Hamlet*, or composed an *Appassionata Sonata*, but all these things most indubitably have been done ; they are facts accepted by the general experience of mankind. And from every age of history, from every clime and every race, there have come forward many witnesses who have testified to the

existence of spiritual beings ; perhaps they were all fools ; perhaps they were all rogues ; perhaps—anything you like ; but there the evidence stands, in volume as great as that of any upon which you base your most positive convictions. The savage medicine-man may lie for pelf and power, and Socrates may have deceived himself—anyhow, they are witnesses. How is it, then, that ghost stories are dismissed as a winter evening diversion for young people, and that the slightest inclination to believe, or even to ask, “Can this be true ?” is set down as a symptom of mental weakness ? The question is hard to answer ; possibly there is such strong temptation to believe in the post-mortem existence of those we have loved, and in the possibility of communication with them, that we distrust our own judgment and summarily reject testimony which, in a less tremendous issue, we should at least examine. In connection with this strange subject everything is strange, and one of the strangest facts is that many of the witnesses whom we pass by with indifference and incredulity, or jibe at with contemptuous amusement, are persons of great intellectual distinction.

It is true that a great part of the mass of testimony about ghosts cannot be subjected to critical examination, and of that which can be, the greater part crumbles away at the test. But there is a residuum which, like the evidence of Sir William Crookes, remains an unsolved mystery. Sir Oliver Lodge has announced his definite belief that he has established communication with his departed friend Myers. When Sir Oliver

publishes the evidence on which his belief reposes one may be compelled respectfully and reluctantly to contend that the evidence is insufficient to establish the conclusion. Meanwhile, I should like to point out that his announcement is not a fit subject for ignorant ridicule, and that he is not a man whose opinions as to observed facts and scientific inferences can be lightly waved aside. The persons who are really foolish and incredulously credulous are those who fail to perceive the enormous importance of the investigation to which Sir Oliver Lodge has applied his powerful mind. He may fail to obtain any positive results, but there is certainly no other question to which a great man might devote his intellect and energy with a larger hope of serving mankind. If a man could lay him down on his death-bed with the same rational expectation of waking up as he has of rising in the morning when he goes to bed at night, the whole aspect of human life would be changed. We have, of course, now all the consolations of faith—reasonable and well-grounded faith; but—why deceive ourselves?—there is a great gulf between faith and knowledge. If men not only believed but knew that there was for them a life beyond the grave, the mystery of pain and sin would melt away, the decline of old age would be an interesting episode, the buoyant hopes of youth would gladden the whole human race, the sting of death would vanish, and sorrow and sighing would flee away. The greatest mystery of all is the indisposition of men to attack the obstacles that bar the way to this blessed certi-

tude, and their readiness to ridicule those who do attack them.

THE CONDITIONS OF CERTAINTY

To the rapidly increasing number of persons who are interested in psychical experiments and investigation, Professor Richet, a scientific man of European fame, is best known as the conductor of a long inquiry into the "manifestations" of Eusapia Paladino, an inquiry which culminated at Cambridge in the discovery and exposure of the medium's clumsy tricks. Since that time Professor Richet has undertaken further experiments with Eusapia, and, as a result, has arrived at the opinion—shared, it is believed, by some of his distinguished colleagues—that the fraudulent performances at Cambridge do not necessarily destroy Eusapia's psychical pretensions. To establish this not unreasonable but very difficult position, Professor Richet delivered to his fellow researchers a little excursus on "The Conditions of Certainty." The essay affords an interesting proof that the methods and habits of mind set up by a rigorous pursuit of physical science are often useless when applied to the abstractions of philosophy. Professor Richet's paper is a most naïve attempt to justify his belief in theories which the great majority of competent thinkers hold to be wholly unproved. It may be of some interest to follow his reasoning, and to see if we can disentangle some of the fallacies on which it rests. Professor Richet scornfully

repudiates all knowledge of metaphysics ; he is going to determine the "conditions of certainty" as he would determine the atomic weight of a new element. Ultimate certainty, he tells us, must depend upon "experiment, the true and rightful mistress of scientific inquiry." "There is, however, a disaccord between the state of public belief and the existence of authentic facts whose cogency would, under other conditions, have been by this time admitted without dispute. We are all of us recalcitrant in accepting facts which do not seem concordant with the facts of every day." "The real world which surrounds us with its prejudices, well or ill founded, its scheme of habitual opinions, holds us in so strong a grasp that we can scarcely free ourselves completely. Certainty does not follow on demonstration, it follows on habit."

Two points in Professor Richet's argument are worth notice. He contends that experiment, personal experiment, is the only sure method and ground of personal conviction, and that there is a great body of general prejudices, opinions, and impressions which operates on the mind of each individual and blurs with the influence of mental habit the convictions that should spring from personal experiment. Of the first point more presently : let it suffice now to say that Professor Richet fails to perceive the difference between certainty, which is a mental condition, and objective truth, or, if I must be very precise, what all the world, for working purposes, agrees to regard as objective truth. Perfect and absolute certainty is consistent with absolute and

constant error. The other point involves a graver misconception ; there are propositions which the great body of competent opinion rules to be antecedently improbable. This fact is the greatest possible safeguard of truth, because it demands from a man who claims to have done or seen that which general human experience pronounces to be impossible, a complete and irresistible volume of proof. Professor Richet, on the other hand, contends that "the conviction of men who have seen ought properly to convince other people ; but by a curious inversion of rôles it is their conviction, the negative conviction of people who have not seen, and who ought not, one would think, to speak on the matter, which weakens and ultimately destroys our own conviction." He finds that his opinions have "undergone serious oscillation—partly from that psychological process of recurrence to habitual modes of thought." In the case of Eusapia he confesses that he is "not even yet absolutely and irremediably convinced. In spite of the astounding phenomena which I have witnessed during my sixty experiments with Eusapia, I have still a trace of doubt, doubt which is weak indeed to-day, but which may perchance be stronger to-morrow. Yet such doubts, if they come, will not be due so much to any defect in the actual experiment, as to the inexorable strength of prepossession which holds me back from adopting a conclusion which contravenes the habitual and almost unanimous opinion of mankind."

Now the habitual and almost unanimous opinion of mankind is sometimes wrong. For instance, a very

short time ago almost everyone, educated or uneducated, believed that the earth was a stationary body, and that the sun moved round it. The best possible experimental proof of this conviction existed. What was the use of telling a man that the earth was a great ball spinning round the sun, when every person could reply, "I stand upon the earth and feel that it is still : I look up at the sun and I see it move" ? Yet mathematicians and astronomers were able easily to show mankind that though the motion of the earth might indeed seem antecedently improbable, really it was not improbable, and as a matter of fact explained and accounted for many of their everyday experiences. But the psychical researchers have never shown that their theories which "contravene the habitual and almost unanimous opinion of mankind" can in any way explain or account for mankind's daily experiences. Take another case where personal experiment fails utterly, and where the almost unanimous opinion of mankind must be held to be conclusive. Not long ago there was a maniac whose delusion was that pebbles were constantly being formed on the top of his skull, and these he would sweep off with his hand. But why do we call this a delusion ? He saw them, felt them, heard them rattle on the floor ; he took them in his hand, they had form and weight for him. Could the wit of man imagine an experiment more conclusive ? Why, then, do we say he was mad ? Simply and solely because his experiences contravened the habitual and almost unanimous opinion of mankind. General experience may be quite mistaken, but whoso-

ever would prove it to be wrong must produce a proof commensurate with the error. A year or two ago general experience would have said that it was quite impossible to look through a living man's clothes and his flesh, to see between his ribs, and to watch the movements of his heart and lungs. Now we know it to be quite possible, because Professor Röntgen came along with his tube and his fluorescent screen, and all men, women, and children on this earth who are not blind may see the thing for themselves. That which aforetime was contrary to general experience has become general experience. But if Professor Röntgen had announced the existence of his rays, but had been unable to make their effects visible to anybody but himself, or only to one or two persons on rare occasions under doubtful conditions, the safe and proper conclusion would have been that the professor was mistaken. Sir William Crookes has declared that once he measured a spirit which was a welcome visitant at his house, and used to play with his children. Until Sir William Crookes can exhibit his spirit to the British Association, we are not only entitled, but, as rational beings, are compelled, to believe that he is the victim of delusion. And when researchers tell us that in the presence of Eusapia water-bottles, without any material contact, moved about a table, we do not find it profitable at present to speculate about infinitely rare and mysterious "projections" from the body of the medium ; we find it more reasonable to conclude that great men of science do not know much about conjuring. When Sir J. J.

Thomson exhibits a self-moving bottle in a lecture at the Royal Institution, when bottles are dancing about all over the country, it will be time for "habitual and almost unanimous opinion" to reconsider the matter, and to seek for some explanation other than fraud and deception.

Section VI

Odds and Ends

“Having picked up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts.”

Don Juan, iii. 83.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SCOTCH

WHY has no clever young man written an essay or even a treatise *On the Importance of being Scotch*? Possibly because the theme is too obvious to excite the curiosity of genius. Yet in the being Scotch there are properties and capacities that might kindle a generous imagination. To be Scotch, for example, is to inherit the possibility of going to Balliol and being reviewed by Mr Andrew Lang, privileges of themselves sufficient to lend distinction to a nation. An Englishman goes to the university if Providence has endowed him with more than ordinary brains or money; in Scotland, where bishops have ceased from troubling and rampagious Dissenters are at rest, any ploughboy may proceed to Oxford if he has the mind. Then, again, to be Scotch is to belong by birth to the biggest and kindest friendly society upon earth. Scotchmen stick together because most of them reside in England and other foreign countries, and even Englishmen are said to grow clannish when they settle among barbarous races. And, let us make humble confession, to be Scotch is to start life with a certain superior capacity of succeeding; it is to have perhaps more grit than grace, to possess tenacity

of purpose, independence, endurance, thrift, shrewdness, and, usually, a kindly optimism imperfectly hidden by a rough tongue and a hard face. If any sceptical Southron should doubt the importance of being Scotch, let him read the life of George Douglas Brown, author of *The House with the Green Shutters*, containing a biographical memoir by Cuthbert Lennox, reminiscences by Andrew Melrose, and an introduction by Andrew Lang. *The House with the Green Shutters* is a remarkable book, which Professor Raleigh "loves" for the elegant reason that "it sticks the Kailyarders like pigs"; which Mr Lang commends in spite of the fact that the "Kailyarders give us more of actual humanity than Mr Brown chose to do in his one novel"; and which the average subscriber to circulating libraries reads and talks about because Mr Lang and Professor Raleigh for diverse reasons have praised it. Mr Brown "arrived," as Mr Lennox and Mr Melrose frequently assure us; but whether his novel will endure it were idle to speculate. It is as hard to determine the place in literature of a "one-book man" as it would be to estimate the gifts of oratory of "single-speech Hamilton." Brown, like a greater man, began life with a satire; possibly he too, had he been spared to mellow age, might have ended it with an apology. This much we may say: The tone, the outlook, and the method of *The House with the Green Shutters* are not those of the greatest fiction. The best literary taste, from Longinus to Lang, is against the pig-sticking performances beloved of Professor Raleigh; and if this book is remembered in fifty

years it will be an exception to the healthy rule of healthy men to forget the records of sordid ugliness, and to cherish the laughter of Rabelais, the sad smiles of Cervantes, the frank, buoyant humanity of Fielding, the great manner of Scott, the large sympathy of Dickens, the wit and insight of Thackeray—aye, and even the too fluent tears of the despised Kailyard.

But I have wandered from the importance of being Scotch. If one is, or is desirous to be, a novelist, that importance manifests itself chiefly at two points. The Scotch story-teller has a familiar dialect with a literary flavour. How great this advantage is, one best perceives when remembering the attempts made by clever writers to give literary dignity and permanence to the Lancashire folk speech. Their efforts are gallant, their books are sometimes brilliant ; but the dialect of Tim Bobbin is a heavy burden to lift into the upper air of letters. How different is the position of the Scotch author with what he calls his “Doric” ! Why broad Scotch should be known as Doric I have often wondered ; perhaps it is because of the well-known habit of the Dorians to overrun the more genial and fertile states of their neighbours, where, in the words of the useful Lemprière, they “seem always to have preserved a grateful recollection of their primitive abode.” But, however the borrowed name was given, the speech itself, with its mingled quaint familiarity, its dignity derived from Burns and great stores of earlier national poetry, is a priceless advantage to a novelist. We are made to feel what Scotch speech can do when we reflect that

there is one, and only one, perfect translation of any of Heine's songs, and that was made by Sir Theodore Martin, not into English, but into Scotch. Even local names in Scotland have a literary flavour denied to English writers. Brown's host on his last visit to Ochiltree was a Mr David Wilson, but to Brown and his other friends he was known as Auchencloigh, and familiarly as 'Cloigh. "Auchencloigh" stands ready made a character for a book ; but what art the poor English novelist would have to exercise to distinguish Mr David Wilson from any other of the thousands of David Wilsons to be found in this country ! 'Cloigh sent Brown a dog, and Brown wrote in reply : "He is very browdened on his new maister. He comes scartin' at my door every morning before I'm up, and bowghs, 'Hey, are ye waukin', Geordie ?'" The man who can write such a language as this starts half equipped at least for success in fiction.

The second point of advantage possessed by Scotch story-tellers is the loving persistence with which family traditions are cherished in Scotland. This has a stimulating influence upon the imagination, and gives in some sense a pride of birth even to humble peasants such as Brown. It is something to have had a grandfather, even if he were hanged for cattle-lifting ; to feel that one was not popped down all new upon the earth. Now, the Scotch preserve the memory of their forebears with pious care, and repeat from generation to generation the legends of their families. There is many a Scotch ploughman who can really trace his ancestry as far as a

new-made English peer pretends to do on his purchased pedigree. In Liverpool are two families sprung from one stock in the county of Ayr, and in Irvine church-yard their common ancestors for two hundred years lie sleeping beneath crumbling stones. And about the end of the eighteenth century the family split into two branches, and began, after the manner of the Scotch, to wander to different ends of the earth. And the two branches became strangers to each other, and had no dealings with one another until a few years ago, when two men, one from each branch, happened to meet. Comparing notes, they found that after a century of separation their families, though they had lost every visible and audible sign of their Scottish origin, still preserved in reverent recollection the memory of their common eponym, a mythical Spanish sailor, supposed to have been wrecked from the Armada on the Ayrshire coast. Scott and Brown are at the opposite poles of fiction, but they alike, and all the Kailyard between them, gain the vividness of their realisation of Scottish life from this persistence of family traditions. Brown was spoiled by Oxford; he was a strong man, but Balliol was too much for him. It was Oxford that made him say: "I can read anything I ever came across except algebra, the elements of logic, and the speeches of the late Mr Gladstone." Perhaps it was Oxford that made him think Miss Guiney's *Patrins* and Professor Raleigh's *Style* to be the only modern books worth much attention. But natural depravity rather than Oxford must bear the blame of his definition of

style as "supernal thought supernally expressed." Not even Balliol could put such an idea into the head of a Scottish ploughboy unless the germs of it were there already.

THE NOBLE ART

A man has been killed in a boxing match, and good people are discussing ways and means of prohibiting such brutal exhibitions. Very well ; but if good people suppose that they can suppress the fighting instinct in human nature ; if they think they can prevent youths from boxing for love, or perhaps for a purse, or that they can hinder other persons from looking on with interest and satisfaction, they are mistaken. At a conference of vegetarians in London a lady declared that not only was the highest morality sustained by an unvaried diet of boiled cabbage, but that it implied a steadfast resolve never to kill anything under any circumstances. No one seems to have asked the lady what would have happened to the highest morality had a flea dared to profane the sanctity of her fair neck. Killing is one of the necessary conditions of living, and fighting is involved in killing. If the race of men did not fight ceaselessly with the race of fleas and the race of tigers, these creatures soon would destroy man from the earth. Possibly the conflicts which civilised man wages with uncivilised are prompted by an instinctive knowledge that, if the former does not destroy the latter, the latter will swallow up the former. At any rate, the truth seems incontestable that any tribe of men or beasts,

or birds, or reptiles, or fishes which cannot or will not fight is doomed to speedy destruction. Lower intelligences, urged by the inexorable will to live, hasten to the fray without any moral scruples. The most highly developed men balance, hesitate, and doubt, and when they fight, fight with carking dread lest there should be something wrong. Perhaps it is one of Nature's ironies that she compels her best creatures to transgress their moral scruples in order that they may exist. Below the level of educated humanity fighting is taken as a matter of course. What self-respecting female in the animal creation would accept a mate who had not, so to speak, taken a few scalps in her behalf? The young male, perceiving that his chances of family happiness depend on his prowess, goes forth, like Sarpedon, either to give glory to another or that another may give glory to him. To most creatures fighting is not the only business of life ; their organisms are adapted to perform various domestic and even social duties. But there are some species in which the fighting instinct has become an all-absorbing monomania, and their bodies have developed into engines of destruction. Mr Basil Thomson has recently described a Burmese sport which consists in matching against one another two fishes of the Plakad family, desperate little bruisers of about the length of a finger, who are born and brought up for no other discoverable purpose than to fight with skill and courage. "By all the laws of evolution a creature that eats its young and fights to the death with everything it meets should have become extinct very early in the

world's history. He will tackle any creature that is not big enough to swallow him whole—the only treatment that seems to quench his fighting spirit—and he will fight till he has never a fin to wag.” Bigger gladiators are the “killer” and the “thresher” of the southern seas, and Mr Louis Becke, in one of his books, gives a charmingly “bluggy” description of a fight between some of these ocean tigers and a huge whale.

Equally pugnacious is the gamecock. The spectacle of a crowd of Spaniards howling and betting round a cockpit is not exactly edifying ; but so far as the birds are concerned it must be remembered that all the king's horses and all the king's men could not make them fight if they were unwilling. But they are always eager for the fray. The best Homeric fighters generally exchanged a little preliminary “slanging” in order to get up steam. The gamecock needs no such encouragement ; he sees his foe in front of him, goes straight for him, and fights until his eyelids will no longer wag. Spaniards show their inbred cruelty by insisting that the fight shall continue until one bird is killed, so that the end of the combat often becomes a horrid picking and tearing of an unresisting bird. If the rules of the game compelled the removal of an obviously beaten combatant, cockfighting would not be a very much worse sport than a good many exhibitions of our English paid athletics. Fisticuffs, then, is one of the manifestations of a universal instinct. As a fine art, however, and as an acceptable method of settling differences, it has been mastered by the world's three great conquering races

alone — the Greeks, the Romans, and the English. Other peoples, other manners. The Frenchman prods with his rapier until honour is satisfied or the purse is won ; the German swathes himself like a mummy and slashes with his schläger ; the Italian stabs with his stiletto ; the Spaniard thrusts with his knife beneath the cloak-guarded arm of his enemy. Greeks, Romans, and English have been wont to double their fists and to settle any little point of dispute. The first-named people, to be quite truthful, were less “keen on” the prize-ring than their successors. The first recorded fight is told in less than fifty lines, while a mere horse-race, in which a couple of the gods resorted to deliberate jockeying, occupies about four hundred. It does not seem to have been much of a fight. One of the men, the poet says, was a good boxer but a poor soldier, thus indicating, according to Mr Gladstone, the immense value set upon skill by the Greeks as contrasted with mere strength ; an observation which leads one to conjecture that boxing is the one accomplishment which Mr Gladstone never acquired. As far as may be discovered from the poet’s vague and non-technical description, Euryalos, the elder man, very naturally went in for a knock-out, and was fortunate enough in the first round to land one on the cheek (so says the poet : most probably it was the jaw) of Epeios that settled the business at once. Achilles appears to have made no charge for seats, so we hear nothing of any grumbling among the spectators. The fight, by the way, was with regulation gloves.

A much stiffer encounter is recorded as having taken place when the ancestors of the Romans were sailing in quest of the ominous sow. The challenger was one Dares, the champion of his day. Some years before he had defeated and killed Butes, a previous holder of the belt, and ever after the fancy were rather shy of him. Now, however, a veteran named Entellus, egged on by a friend, decided to try conclusions with him. Entellus produced a pair of enormous gloves stiffened with lead and iron—a pretty cool proceeding. Dares, of course, protested, and the referee ordered the fight to take place with regulation gloves. Entellus was longer in the reach, and Dares danced round him, trying to get in for a knock-out. Some pretty heavy exchanges took place in the early rounds, and Entellus was losing his wind. Dares pressed vigorously, and at the end of the round Entellus fell exhausted. After being sponged and fanned, however, he came up smiling ; Dares, no doubt, was over-confident, for he allowed the veteran to “land him one on the mouth” that knocked out his front teeth and practically settled the business. Dares, “groggy” after the blow, was pounded all round the ring until the referee interfered, stopped the fight, and gave the purse to Entellus. Dares was carried off by his seconds, spitting out his teeth, and probably, though this is not recorded by the poet, murmuring as many imprecations as the state of his mouth would permit. There is ground for conjecturing that the four-ounce glove was made compulsory after this fight, to prevent boxers from stealing a mean advantage, as Entellus tried

to do with his lead-weighted abominations. But it may be doubted whether, from a humane point of view, the gloves have any advantage over the bare fists. Fists cut, while gloves bruise ; a blow with the fist is more likely to knock out than a blow with the glove. On the other hand, a fighter with his bare fists has his knuckles to think of, and by a furious blow is as likely to disable himself as his antagonist. The gloves protect his knuckles without diminishing his power to inflict punishment. When once he finds a weak spot on an antagonist whose strength is ebbing more quickly than his courage, he can go on pounding the place to a jelly, and the man's plight will be worse next day than if the fight had been with bare fists. Gloves, in fact, are a concession to mistaken sentiment, and, like many similar concessions, accomplish the very thing they are supposed to avoid.

THE PURSUIT OF BLUNDERS

The pursuit of blunders is not necessarily criticism. But it is an amusing occupation, especially when it leads to the exposure of error-hunters themselves. Thus a gentleman possessing high academic honours once wrote to the newspapers to complain of prevalent popular ignorance in the use of Latin phrases. He was hurt beyond measure because newspapers and politicians will persist in talking of a *casus belli*. Now, said he, a *casus belli* is an "accident of war"; what they mean is a *causa belli*. This is a typical blunder of the schoolmaster, the man who knows something of Latin down to Tacitus,

but airily ignores the existence of late Latin forms and phrases. In the mouth of Cicero *casus belli* might have meant an "accident of war." But when Lord Salisbury or Prince Bismarck used it, he used it with perfect correctness and propriety, and he did not mean exactly *causa belli*. In his mouth the words implied "a case for war," and *casus*, in this sense, is good late Latin, and its use is seen in other well-established phrases, such as *casus fœderis* and *casus omissus*, which are familiar to the jurisconsult and the lawyer. Schoolmasters are fond of making fun of the blunders of boys, but the victims, with a little trouble, might compile an entertaining list of the errors of their tormentors. Carlyle, for instance, was once an usher, and he in *Sartor Resartus* perpetrated a curious Latin slip, which has never been corrected. He wrote: "That was, in fact, the *Speculum* or watch tower of Teufelsdröckh." But *speculum* is one of the Latin words, dear to the hearts of examiners, that have one meaning in the singular and another in the plural. As written by Carlyle, it means a mirror; the word for watch tower is *specula*. At a university examination, a few years ago, in a mechanics paper the hapless candidates were asked to calculate the "meeting point" of two stones dropped from given heights down a well. The proper answer to the question, of course, was: "The stones will never meet." But what the examiner meant—he himself is an amusing compiler of schoolboy "howlers"—was that the candidates should determine the point at which one stone would overtake the other.

These errors, of course, are only the little stumbles of careless learning. They have no resemblance to the "howlers" of audacious ignorance. The finest example of these with which I am acquainted occurs in a novel of Ouida, where the "talented" lady informs us that the hands of the *Scipii* were nailed to the *rostræ*. After this we need not be surprised to find that she describes Actea burying the body of Nero, which actually was burnt, or that she appears to believe Cato the Censor and Cato of Utica to have been one and the same person. Writers caught in such enormities as these may plead that they sin in good company, for Shakspeare, in *Troilus and Cressida*, makes Hector quote Aristotle. Perhaps the dramatist did not know how great an anachronism he had committed; but, having written a fine scene, I fancy he would have been tranquilly indifferent to the charge had it been brought against him. Less excuse can be made for Victor Hugo, who translated "Frith of Forth" into a French phrase meaning "First of the Fourth." The same great man has left it upon record that the English king Charles II. murdered his brother the Duke of Gloucester. Hugo, perhaps, had some vague memory, gained from French translations of Shakspeare, of our Hunchback, whom he confused with old Rowley's brother, and then transformed the merry monarch into a savage assassin. Many excellent collections exist of the blunders incident to translation. A splendid assortment of German-English and English-German "howlers" was published in Strasburg a few years ago under the title

Englische Sprach-Schnitzer, but unfortunately the best of these are too highly seasoned to bear reproduction. A number of English-French absurdities are familiar to most persons. Walpole, as everyone knows, says that the Duchess of Bolton translated the title of Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* into *La dernière chemise de l'amour*. Max O'Rell's schoolboy must have been thinking of the Duchess of Bolton when he turned "a chest of drawers" into *une poitrine de caleçon*.

It is unwise, however, for the most careful of us to be puffed up on the score of avoiding blunders, for there are certain literary and etymological enormities which custom compels the wisest man to commit. For instance, whoso refused to use "riches" in the plural would lay himself open to the charge of pedantry. Yet so to employ it involves a wilful disregard of its derivation. Nobody hesitates to speak of a green pea or of "a pea in a pan," but "pea" is an incorrect singular from "pease," as "Chinee" is from "Chinese." Every child is taught that an island is land "surrounded" by water, which really means land overflowed by water, for surround derives from *suronder*, and has gained its meaning to "encircle" through confusion with the word "round." The most precise person might, without a blush, inform a waiter that he disliked "parboiled" fish. He would convey to the mind of that functionary the impression that he disapproved of half-boiled fish as an article of diet, but what he would really say would be that he disliked fish thoroughly boiled, for "parboil" means to boil thoroughly, and our common usage of it

arises from a confusion of the prefix "per" with the word "part." English is full of ambiguities, arising from its wealth of words, and when one remembers how some of these have come into existence it seems surprising that the language is not even less precise. In *The Monastery*, Scott is made to write : "Hardened wretch, art thou but this instant delivered from death, and dost thou so soon *morse* thoughts of slaughter?" The extraordinary verb "to morse" seemed likely to find a place in literary English. Learned persons exercised their ingenuity upon it ; some explained it as "to prime," from the French *amorce* ; others as "to bite," from the Latin *mordere*. The theory that the word was a misprint was laughed to scorn. One authority wrote : "That the word as a misprint should have been printed and read by millions for fifty years without being challenged and altered exceeds the bounds of probability." At last somebody had the brilliant idea of consulting Scott's original manuscript, and there the "Wizard" was found to have written plainly enough "nurse" !

CONCERNING KISSING

From America, the cunabula of reform, comes news of a new movement "inaugurated," need it be said, by the new woman ; and the object of this movement is the partial abolition of kissing. Coarse, sensual, miserable man, whom unkind nature has made necessary for the continued existence of superior woman, as yet may view the situation with tranquillity, for the

proposed reform is a domestic matter concerning women alone. It is the kiss ceremonial, not the kiss passional, that is attacked, and if the American proposals should be accepted in this country, still will it be possible for Daphnis, o' summer nights, beneath the shelter of a roadside hedge, to embrace fair Chloe ; thereby doing himself much pleasure, and affording to passing professors of purity an opportunity to send protesting paragraphs to the local papers. The American new woman has a delicate conscience ; above all other virtues she prizes sincerity. Now, at present, social regulations compel her to press her lips to the cheeks of sisters concerning whom she entertains the very lowest opinion. Thus it often happens that two ladies, after a parting embrace of demonstrative warmth, may proceed to tear to tatters the character of each other. To the hypocrisy of such behaviour the conscience of the new woman has been awakened, and she proposes to give up—kissing. Immoral man might suggest that it would be better to keep the kissing and to give up envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness ; but the new woman is not likely to accept her ethics from him, and he must console himself with the hope that when the ladies cease to kiss one another an enlarged field of activity will be opened up for him. At what period of the world's history ladies began to salute one another with a kiss cannot be determined, but it must have been comparatively late, for, curiously enough, almost all the kissing in early literature is done by men. The earliest kiss of which we have any record is that

bestowed by Jacob upon his father during the course of a transaction that, in our time, would have been investigated by the Probate Court. A custom begun so badly was sure to get a bad name, and philosophers, long before the days of the American ladies, said evil things about it. Thus Socrates, if we may believe Xenophon, declared that a kiss was as dangerous as a tarantula spider. At this time, however, Socrates was approaching his seventieth year, and at his best he was not a handsome man, so, perhaps, he was only disparaging sour grapes. The kisses of the Bible are almost all of them simple tokens of salutation. For example, Moses and Aaron in the wilderness comfort one another with a fraternal buss; and the former, well described as the meekest of men, upon one occasion met his father-in-law and kissed him; had it been his mother-in-law I believe he would have kissed her. Quite early, too, the kiss was made an instrument of treachery, as when Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him, and with the other hand drove a dirk into his heart. Faithful, indeed, are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

This seizing of the beard as a symbol of respect is a curious custom, inasmuch as in our time it is an act the reverse of complimentary. When Hamlet was spoiling for a fight with his stepfather, he invited all and sundry to pluck him by the beard, just as the stage Irishman implores his friends to tread on the tail of his coat. But when Iolaos, with the children of Hercules, sought

the protection of the King of Athens, the former seized the monarch by the beard and invoked his friendship. This the king accorded, not because he was taken at a disadvantage, but because such a respectful appeal was quite irresistible. In another place we read that Thetis, beseeching the favour of Zeus for her son, grasped the deity by the knees and touched him beneath the chin. It must not be supposed that the maritime lady, in any spirit of levity or disrespect, "chucked" the father of gods beneath the chin. Doubtless she grasped his beard as an expression of humble trust. This, however, is somewhat apart from the literature of kissing. In Homer, as in the Bible, nearly all the kissing takes place between men, and is nothing but a formal salutation. For instance, the swineherd and the neatherd kiss the returned Odysseus, a proof of affectionate fidelity he possibly would have excused them with cheerfulness. Elsewhere Odysseus kisses his grandmother, and in another place the aged nurse of Telemachus kisses the youth, but these must be classed as ceremonial salutes. In all Homer the only instance of kissing among the sexes, at any rate the only instance I remember, is the embrace Penelope gives the Wanderer when she recognises him. It may be objected that at their age the heyday in the blood must have been tame ; but the persistence of the youthful suitors suggests that Penelope had retained many attractions, and some of the recent adventures of Odysseus had proved that he bore his years lightly. There is no kiss of passion in the *Iliad*, but there is an

illustration of the exquisite delicacy of the poet's feeling in regard to this matter. When Hector bids farewell to Andromache and Astyanax, he kisses his child, but his wife he only caresses with his hand. Handmaidens and soldiers stood round, and a kiss from the lips of Andromache was too sacred for the eyes of a stranger to behold. To the early historians, as well as to the poets, kissing is simply a method of greeting among men. The Persians, according to Herodotus, were as prone to kissing as Frenchmen are. If a Persian met a friend of equal rank he kissed him on the mouth ; if he encountered a friend of slightly superior social station, he kissed him on the cheek—gave him, in fact, just such a salute as Mrs de Jones, who keeps her carriage, expects from Mrs Smith, who goes shopping in a cab. Finally, if he met an acquaintance of much higher rank he offered no kiss, but prostrated himself in the dust before him. There is a story about Cyrus, recorded by Xenophon, indicating that all this kissing sometimes led to inconvenience. Much later, the Romans found out its dangers. They recognised what was known as the *osculi jus*, or right of kissing between relatives, and it was by availing herself of this right, so Suetonius tells us, that Agrippina induced her uncle Claudius to marry her, thereby bringing about the reign of Nero and unnumbered woes for the Romans.

What symbol of greeting the American ladies propose to substitute for kissing I do not know. Perhaps a commission will be appointed to inquire into the

various forms of salutation practised throughout the world, and possibly they may light upon a convenient alternative. For my part I know of none that is not open to serious objection. Various customs recorded by classical writers would offend the susceptibilities of the ladies of Boston and Brooklyn, and their husbands would oppose the introduction of some of them. At the present time in Polynesia it is polite to rub noses with an acquaintance ; but this method is hardly suitable to a variable climate or to a community addicted to tight lacing. The Arabs of Arabia Petrea are said not to kiss, but to lay their cheeks together instead. Again one sees obvious obstacles in the way of the adoption of the Arabian system, especially during the ball season ; in fact, I am inclined to think that, by a process of elimination, the American ladies will be led back to kissing. The custom is very old. Physicists trace it to the habit which animals have of licking their young, or to the instinct that leads the young to purse up their lips in search of their natural food. Then it is supposed to have a religious sanction. The Romans when passing their temples saluted them by kissing their hands, and this was the earliest form of "adoration," which with fanciful ingenuity is derived from "ad" and "os." However this may be, and whatever philological difficulties may be raised, the fact is certain that there is a close natural relation between adoration and kissing. One does not believe that an important privilege of man is threatened seriously by the American movement ; but lest it should prove to be the thin end

of the wedge, I think it right to enter a timely protest on behalf of the universal *osculi jus*.

ON MATHEMATICS

The utility of various branches of study and education is a question propounded from generation to generation without any prospect of final settlement, since we can never agree upon a final definition of utility. In our time Greek is the subject of most dispute. Persons who cannot read it usually condemn as waste of time the teaching of a dead language to the youth of a commercial people. On the other hand, enlightened persons, who can tell at a glance the difference between a first aorist and a paulo-post-future, are apt to be contemptuous of the sordid ignorance of the masses in exalting German commercial correspondence and the rule of three over the philosophy of Plato and the poetry of Homer. But nowadays the British parent no longer doubts the practical value of mathematics. About ninety per cent. of the duffers in our secondary schools, having failed in their first shot at the services or the learned professions, decide to become engineers ; and to be an engineer you must know at least a little elementary geometry and trigonometry, an amount which, by means of Professor Perry's ingenious devices, might be imparted to a congenital idiot without overstraining his faculties. Yet at one time and another the educational value of mathematics has been argued quite as angrily as that of Greek. It is the subject which creates the

widest cleavage among educated persons ; it has a strange property of irritating the purely literary mind. Your lordly classic looks upon a mathematical man as a sort of Babbage's calculator. Lamartine, for instance, whose knowledge of the subject probably was not very profound, said that the teaching of mathematics made a man into a machine and degraded thought. The soul of a people, he cried, is not a mute and dead cypher by whose aid one counts quantities and measures distances ; the foot-rule and the compass can do that. Fénelon went further, and bade his friends beware of "the diabolical sorceries and allurements of geometry." The late Bishop Dupanloup said : "A mathematician the more, a man the less" ; and our English biologist, Owen, contemptuously postulated the existence of a sub-class of the human family, the "homo mathematicus." These excellent gentlemen spoke out of the fulness of their hearts rather than their heads. Locke, on the other hand, declared that mathematics is most useful to accustom the mind to reason with justice and order ; all men need not become good mathematicians ; but when by that study they had acquired a good method of reasoning they could apply it to all the other branches of knowledge. Locke thought that algebra was particularly useful in supplying new views and furnishing new helps to the understanding. Pascal also declared out of his experience that between two equal minds, all other things being equal, the one which had geometry excelled, and acquired an entirely new vigour.

Poinsot, a famous French mathematician, to whom we

owe the theory of couples, said that it was not necessary to know the principles of mathematics to enjoy their advantages ; it sufficed to have known them ; since all the operations and all the theories that they teach us may pass from the memory, but the power and exactitude which they lend to our reasoning remain ; “ the spirit of mathematics dwells within like a torch guiding us in the midst of our reading and researches ; this it is which dissipates the idle crowd of irrelevant ideas and promptly discovers truth and error.” The operations, the theories, and the spirit alike must have passed from the mind of the lady who, when asked her age, said ; “ I was eighteen when we were married, and my husband was thirty. Now he’s twice as old, so I’m thirty-six.” An inference such as this lends weight to a dictum of Francis Bacon. If, he said, a man’s mind wanders, make him study mathematics ; for, in the demonstrations, if it swerves ever so little, he will be obliged to begin again. Napoleon took a broader view of the subject ; he declared that the advancement and perfecting of mathematics were related to the prosperity of the State. Yet that mighty man was not entirely controlled by rigorous thought, for at another time he said : “ In all that one undertakes one must give two-thirds to reason and one-third to chance. Increase the first fraction, and you will be cowardly ; increase the second, and you will be rash.” But Euler, who, perhaps, was prejudiced, said we ought rather to trust algebra than our own judgment. The enthusiasm of Terquem, the editor of *Ben Ezra*, went even further, for he declared that a rigorous logic and

the quest and love of truth for itself formed a moral part of mathematics. It must have been under the influence of this moral part that Madame Swetchine calculated that the ideal of friendship "is to feel one and to remain two."

Cuvier was no believer in moral mathematics ; he believed that the delicate shades of moral ideas elude the rigour of mathematical reasoning ; that a too exclusive use of these often leads the mind to wish to reduce everything to invariable rules and absolute principles ; "a dangerous method," he says, "when applied to the government of human society, or even to the particular relations that bind us to other men." Madame de Stael, who knew nothing about the subject, was of the same opinion. She held that nothing is less applicable to life than mathematical reasoning ; for a mathematical proposition must be true or false ; while in all other propositions the true and the false are mingled. Fontenelle, however, who was a man of letters, declared that the spirit of geometry was not so completely absorbed by geometry that it could not be borne and directed to other forms of knowledge. "A work of morals, of politics, of criticism, perhaps even of eloquence, would be more beautiful, all other things being equal, if it were made by the hand of geometry." On the other side, an English metaphysician of the eighteenth century laid it down that mathematics gives a false precision, an apparent rigour which masks weakness of reasoning, an inflexibility which multiplies errors, renders them irreparable, and hinders a just notion of things.

“Alas !” he said, “there is little mathematics in the things of life ; they are complex, changeable, made of subtleties, of things unexpressed, of details, of things impossible to set down by any formula.” Leibnitz believed, and Aristotle seems to have been of the same opinion, that there is a mathematical element in morals, and a moral element in mathematics. The great Lagrange found mathematics a rod and a staff in the valley of the shadow of death. After an unexpected rally he wrote : “I observed with pleasure the graduated progression of the diminution of my forces, and I reached the limit without trouble, without regret, by a very gentle descent ; it is a last function which is neither painful nor disagreeable. A few more instants and there would have been no more functions ; death was everywhere. I wished to die ; yes, I wished to die. But my wife did not wish it. I should have preferred a wife less good, less eager to rekindle my forces, and who would have allowed me to end quietly. I have run my course ; I have gained some fame in mathematics ; I have not done any harm ; it is time to finish.” Something may be said for a study which confers such peace of mind as this at a point where—to use the words of a metaphysical dreamer—the tangent of life’s angle becomes infinite.

ART AND GEOMETRY

The story goes that Plato inscribed over the porch of the Academy, “Let no one unversed in geometry enter

my doors." Now, the Academy was the place where they made Athenian citizens ; not only the warriors and the statesmen, but the thinkers and the artists ; the men who developed an art whose fame is indestructible and whose excellence is unsurpassed and probably unsurpassable by human skill. So that the training given in the Academy is worthy of consideration from the æsthetic as well as from the intellectual standpoint. If we could impose as a binding canon the injunction, "Let no one pretend to be an artist or a philosopher who is unversed in geometry," the theory and the practice of the various forms of art to-day would rest upon a much more stable foundation than they do. The Greeks did accept this canon, and that is one reason why their art was so much nobler and healthier than ours. "All this geometry," says M. Rebière, "will have sharpened your wits ; in all subjects you will have become experts in disengaging from an idea that which it contains, in substituting for one question other questions easier to advance towards solution. That solution you will not always attain, but you will have more chances of attaining it, inasmuch as you will be better equipped to seek it—to seek it patiently, methodically. At any rate, you will not humiliate reason by extracting the false from the true." You will not learn geometry believing that it will be of direct and immediate service to you in the business of your life. You will remember the story of Stobæus, that someone who had begun to read geometry with Euclid, when he had learned the first theorem asked

Euclid, "But what shall I get by learning these things?" Euclid called his slave, and said, "Give him threepence, since he must make gain out of what he learns."

He will appreciate the dictum of Proclus that "if it is necessary to refer the benefit arising from it to something else, we must connect that benefit with intellectual knowledge, to which it leads the way and is a propædæutic, clearing the eye of the soul and taking away the impediments which the senses place in the way of the knowledge of universals." This discipline, be it remembered, was valued by the Greeks for its capacity to produce artists as well as thinkers. Its operation on the ordinary man was well expressed by Thomas Reid, the apostle of common-sense, whose words, retranslated from a French version, were: "When a young man of ordinary talent begins to study Euclid, everything at first astonishes him. His conception is uncertain and his judgment weak; he leans in part on the evidence of the thing and in part on the authority of the master. But as he advances through the definitions, the axioms, the elementary propositions, he beholds a great light. The language becomes more familiar to him, and produces conceptions clearer and sharper; his judgment grows stronger, he begins to understand what a demonstration is, and it is impossible for him to understand it without being pleased by it; he perceives that there is a kind of evidence independent of authority. He seems to emerge from slavery." Geometry is, in fact, the lowest foundation-stone of human reason, and the theories of those who practise the arts, as well as

those who practise the sciences, ought to be based on reason.

The *Times* the other day had a charming but scathing article on virtuosity in art, suggested by Signor Annunzio's declaration that going up in an aeroplane "gave him a feeling of ecstatic joy only comparable to the most intense ideal sensations of art and love." The *Times* improved the shining hour by giving a useful lecture to the disciples of sensation in art, the persons that "are throwing away their inheritance with both hands, since they are losing their sense of the relative value of things upon which all art and all its principles of selection are based." We may be quite sure that Plato would have thrust from the Academy with scorn and contempt such a man, and any man who tried to represent by any method of art his bizarre sensations in the presence of a subject. An artist's sensations, the *Times* finely remarked, "are not interesting to others, however well he describes them, because they only tell us what he is, not what he wants to be." "There is no importance," continued the leading journal, "in the fact that a gentleman in an aeroplane feels as if he were in love. It tells us nothing about love and nothing about aeroplanes, and we are not sure that it really tells us anything about the gentleman except that he has a remarkable facility in the experience of sensations, or at least in the description of them." We may be quite sure that the *Times* would agree with one in saying of a picture that represented some monstrous perversion of human proportions and of good taste that it was a work of no

importance as presenting "a series of sensations which have no connection except as they happen to a single person, and no significance or value except for the pleasure or pain they give to that person." The Athenians avoided such extravagances because they entered the Academy with minds already attuned to reason and common-sense by the study of geometry. Clairaut once said that geometry is necessary to shut the mouth of a charlatan, and there are some disciples of art and some of letters who would be better men if they were precluded from producing anything more until they had mastered every page of the three volumes of Dr Heath's new edition of Euclid.

THE AXIOM OF INFINITY

In *Sesame and Lilies* Ruskin says: "There are masked words abroad which nobody understands, but which everybody uses, and most people will also fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they mean this, that, or the other of things dear to them. These masked words are the unjust stewards of all men's ideas ; whatever fancy or favourite instinct a man most cherishes he gives to his favourite masked word to take care of for him ; the word at last comes to have an infinite power over him—you cannot get at him but by its ministry." Now, in this passage Ruskin himself uses one of the most troublesome masked words ever coined : what idea does he wish to convey to us when he speaks about "infinite" power ? Everybody uses this word ; the

lady of the house will tell you that her cook gives her infinite trouble, and that her son takes infinite pains over his lessons ; Dr Watts informs us that in the Land of Pure Delight "Infinite day excludes the night" ; theologians declare that the Deity is infinite, and celebrate His infinite goodness. Schoolboys until quite recently were wont to assert with cheerful confidence that parallel straight lines do not meet, even if produced to an infinite distance ; some scandal, however, exists with regard to this matter, which is now concealed as far as possible from the youthful mind, for in the scholastic world has arisen the horrid suspicion that if you follow parallel straight lines far enough, you will find they begin to depart from the path of strict rectitude, and ultimately meet in an unhallowed embrace. The various persons who thus use the word "infinite" presumably know what they mean ; I don't, and have no time to inquire. The word so employed is a pretty plaything for the metaphysician, wherewith he can describe argumentative circles of much accuracy and with great rapidity. There is, however, a usage of the word in which it ought to have a definite and constant meaning ; mathematicians often speak of, and operate with, infinite quantities, and they make many important calculations by means of the infinitesimal calculus. So that when Dr Cassius J. Keyser, Professor of Mathematics, Columbia University, in the city of New York, discusses "The Axiom of Infinity," we expect that he will be careful to define his terms. One receives a shock at the outset to find that the professor intends to

discuss "that most fundamental of questions, whether it is possible to demonstrate the existence of the infinite." Infinite quantities are kittle cattle to herd, but "the infinite"—an abstract entity—is a creature that eludes us altogether.

A few sentences further on Dr Keyser relieves himself as follows :—"This subject of the infinite how it baffles approach ! How immediate and how remote it seems, how it abides and yet eludes the grasp, how familiar it appears, mingling with the elemental simplicities of the heart, continuously weaving itself into the intimate texture of common life, and yet how austere and immense and majestic, outstretching the sublimest flights of the imagination, transcending the stellar depths, immeasurable by the beginningless, endless chain of the ages ! Comprehend the infinite ! No wonder we hear that none but the infinite is adequate to that. 'Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst.' Be it so." Well, really ! Cis-Atlantic mathematicians manage to get along without these poetic frenzies. When Mr Fosbroke, Mr Bouncer, and Mr Green examined the freshman, they floored him by demanding a Ciceronian equivalent for "bosh." It is a pity the young man failed to find the word, because such a term, at once stately and forcible, would prove very handy at times. See how these mazes of metaphysics get themselves manufactured. Invent a word, say, "gnumph" ; it means nothing at all. Then assert that man, or matter, or soul, or deity, or anything else, is "gnumph," and begin to speculate on the transcendental mystery in-

volved in the position ! This is what Professor Royce did, who began the discussion of the infinite in the *Hibbert Journal*. It is what Professor Keyser does until he drops metaphysics and takes to mathematics. It is what Dedekind and Cantor did, the two German gentlemen who started this wild-goose chase. Infinity when properly defined, and employed with the only sense in which it has either meaning or use, has no more mystery about it than boiled cabbage. At the beginning of his excellent treatise on the Differential Calculus, Mr Isaac Todhunter remarks that we sometimes say “ y is infinite when z is equal to 1 ; but it must not be forgotten that this last phrase is an abbreviation, and must be considered to mean, ‘By taking z sufficiently near to unity y can be made to exceed any assigned magnitude however great.’” That is all. But the metaphysicians are not contented with an explanation so simple ; they speak as though infinity were a number, or a place which you would reach if you only could go far enough, as if there were a point where finity ends and infinity begins, a point which may be passed as one crosses the border between England and Scotland ; they take a simple and well-defined term, and begin to wonder what would happen if it meant something else, and the problem is complicated when they proceed to inform us that this something else is beyond the comprehension of the human intellect.

Such processes degrade mathematics to the level of the young ladies who used to say, and possibly still say,

that a dance or a partner was awfully jolly, meaning thereby that they can find no adequate word to express their satisfaction with the dance or the gentleman. But mathematics is never at a loss for the right word, and never uses it in an ambiguous sense. Mathematics is the science of measurement ; all its processes are employed for this purpose and for nothing else whatsoever. There are, however, certain things which it cannot measure exactly ; it cannot, for instance, express in figures the ratio between the radius and the circumference of a circle ; but it can make the error as small as you like : if you took a radius a billion times as long as the distance of the remotest of the visible stars, it could compute the circumference for you, and if the error in the calculation were represented by a length of line, the length would be so small as to be invisible under the most powerful microscope in the world. Quantities for the most part are made infinite to reduce the limits of error. Take the area of a circle ; you can measure the area approximately by cutting it up into squares, and the more squares you make the more accurate your results will be, and if you go on for ever increasing the number of your squares—as is assumed by the method of the integral calculus—you would go on for ever getting your result more and more accurate. But there never would come a time when the number of your squares would cease to be finite, because there is no number, however great or however small, which is not finite ; and when you say, as you do in integrating, that you increase the number

of squares or "elements" to infinity, you mean that you take a number of them that exceeds any assigned number, however great. Theories, axioms, and illustrations about transcendental infinities generally contain some initial fallacy. Professor Royce wrote some delightful pages on infinity, as illustrated by what he called "Self-Representation," calmly indifferent to the fact that he had begun by postulating that which is impossible and inconceivable. You were to take a package—say of tea—which bore a label representing the package itself ; that label would represent a package with a label, that label again another package with a label, and so on to infinity. The illustration tumbles to pieces when we reflect that the original label, if it represented the original package, must have represented a package without a label ; furthermore, it is as utterly impossible for the mind to conceive a thing bearing as part of itself a complete representation of itself as it is to imagine space of four dimensions. I suspect that Cantor's Axiom of Infinity, on which most modern speculations rest, involves some such fallacy. It runs : "An assemblage of elements is infinite or finite, according as it has or has not a part to which the whole is just equivalent." Now, it is impossible to dissociate the idea of "part" from that of ratio. Every part must have some ratio to its whole, the half, the quarter, the thousandth, the millionth, or what not. But every finite part whatsoever of an infinite quantity bears the ratio of nought to its whole, and it is perilous work juggling with zero. There is a catch which years ago

used to be propounded to small boys :—Let x be equal to one, therefore x squared is equal to one, therefore x squared minus one is equal to x minus one ; from both sides cut out x minus one ; then x plus one is equal to one ; therefore two is equal to one. Cantor's Axiom of Infinity appears to me to partake of the nature of this proof.

MORE ABOUT INFINITY

One of De Morgan's best stories tells how Euler put the unbelieving Diderot to confusion by giving him a mathematical proof of the existence of God. Diderot was on a visit to the Court of Russia, and he scandalised some of the more devout courtiers by his atheistical talk. So they took counsel with the illustrious Euler, and then informed Diderot that an eminent mathematician had an algebraical proof of the existence of God, which he would communicate before the whole Court if agreeable. Diderot consented, and Euler approached him with the gravest air, and in a tone of perfect conviction said, " Monsieur,

$$\frac{a+b^n}{n} = x,$$

donc Dieu existe ; répondez." Diderot, to whom algebra was double Dutch, was utterly flabbergasted by this ridiculous *non sequitur*, and amidst peals of laughter craved permission to return to France. I was reminded of this story by an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, in which

the writer essayed in grim earnest the demonstration that Euler advanced in bitter jest. The article in question was entitled, "The Message of Modern Mathematics to Theology," by Dr Cassius J. Keyser ; and I am disposed to think that Dr Keyser's reasoning would be as unintelligible to Euler as Euler's was to Diderot. Dr Keyser's argument may be stated as follows : The one comprehensive attribute of Deity postulated by theology is infinity, and he proceeds : "Fortunately, it so happens that there is not to be found in science, not even in the domain of mathematics—the very home and fatherland of precision—a single idea, notion, or concept that is more clearly or sharply defined than is the concept of Infinitude." Dr Keyser appears to think that if he can give a rational definition of infinity in terms of finite intelligence he has removed the conception of Deity from the region of hypothesis, and placed it in the region of accepted fact. I cannot follow him to this conclusion, and, indeed, throughout the article his ratiocination is less impressive than his rhetoric. "Infinite, Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and the rest," he says, "are these mighty terms, these vast resounding voices from the deeps of Feeling destined to none but emotional significance ? Are they to be confined for ever to the impulsatory offices of Poetry and Prayer ? Or is it possible to define them sharply as concepts, to confer upon them the character of scientific notions, and thus, while preserving their power to express emotion and energise life, make them sources of light as well ? I hold that

by virtue of certain modern developments in mathematics such an achievement is become possible." The modern development of mathematics referred to is the discovery of Cantor mentioned in the previous chapter, that infinity is a quantity or magnitude of which the part may be equal to the whole. "A collection, class, set, group, aggregate, ensemble, manifold, or multitude of elements—be these points or passions, ions or ideas, relations or terms, quantities or qualities, tones of colour or shadings of sound, degrees of wisdom or goodness or power, or any other forms or modes or determinations, is infinite if, and only if, the collection contains a part or sub-collection that is numerically equal to the whole. On the other hand, a collection is finite if, and only if, it contains no part or sub-collection of the same kind numerically equal to the whole."

To the uninstructed non-mathematical mind this theory may appear to be foolishness, and as it is developed by Dr Keyser it is sheer, unadulterated foolishness; but we must not forget that that famous and erudite mathematician, Dr Young, has employed it as a powerful instrument of calculation to obtain most valuable and exact results. Let us, then, leave the general theory alone and deal only with Dr Keyser's popular development of it. He bids us consider two concentric spheres, the surface of the inner one white and named the silver sphere, the surface of the outer one yellow and called the golden sphere. Next imagine the sheaf, as it is called, of rays consisting of all the

straight lines that have their beginning at the centre of the spheres and thence extend outward indefinitely in every direction. It is plain, he continues, that any ray *R* of the sheaf pierces the silver sphere in a point say *S*, and the golden one in a point say *G*. Calling *S* and *G* a pair of points, it is evident that, by considering all the rays of the sheaf, the points of the one sphere are paired with those of the other, a unique and reciprocal one to one correspondence being thus established between the points of the silver and of the golden sphere. "We see at once that the number of points on the silver sphere, however small, is the same as the number of points on the golden one, however large, and, moreover, that this number is precisely the same as that of the rays of the sheaf." The second part of this demonstration involves the schoolboy fallacy that points have magnitude, and that a superficies can be built up of points. "Now, conceive a curve, red, if you like, for the sake of vividness, to be drawn on the golden sphere and enclosing on it a region *A* exactly equal in area to the silver sphere. The number of points in the region *A* is, of course, the same as the number on the silver sphere, and is, therefore, the same as the number on the golden one," and thus a part may be equal to the whole. The "of course" in the above sentence is really sublime. It was Routh, I believe, who, whenever he found in a text-book the statement that "so and so is obvious," was wont to remark: "That means, gentlemen, that he can't prove it."

How does Dr Keyser know so intuitively that the

number of points in the region A is equal to the number of points in the surface of the silver sphere? He has not found it out by the method of one-one correspondence, because by that method the number of points in A is equal to the number in a segment of the silver sphere determined by radii produced to the boundaries of A. He has assumed a finite magnitude for a point, and, dividing the equal areas of the segment and the silver sphere, by it has discovered an equality of points. But the area of a point is zero, and, therefore, by this method we find that the number of points in each of the two spheres and in the golden segment is alike infinite; but it does not follow, as we shall presently see, that two infinities are what, if they were finite quantities, we should call equal, and every finite superficies, however unthinkably minute, contains—if it may be said to consist of points at all—an infinite number of points just the same as the vastest superficies that the human mind can conceive or represent. This is the immediate result of juggling with infinities. Dr Keyser, having thus to his own satisfaction proved the existence of the Deity geometrically, proceeds to prove it arithmetically. Consider two sets of numbers :

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{(W)} \ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 \ . \ . \ . \ . \ n \\ \text{(P)} \ 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 \ . \ . \ . \ . \ 2n \end{array}$$

(W) is a set containing the totality of the positive integers, whatever that may mean; (P) is a set containing the totality of the even positive integers. The number of terms in each set is infinite, but every term in (P)

is contained in (W), which contains other terms as well ; therefore the part may be equal to the whole. Now, if n increases indefinitely—and that is really the only infinity with which mathematics concerns itself—if n is even there are $\frac{n}{2}$ terms in (P) which do not figure in

(W) at all, and if it is odd there are $\frac{n+1}{2}$ such terms.

But Dr Keyser may say : “ Your n is always finite, however big you may take it ; and I am supposing that (W) contains the totality of positive integers.” Well, so be it ; and (W) is arranged in ascending order of magnitude and n is the biggest number of the set. But (P) is (W) multiplied by 2 term for term, and the last term of (P) is $2n$, which by hypothesis lies to the left of n and is smaller than it. So that what we really have proved is that twice infinity may be smaller than once infinity, which is what we want to upset the argument from the golden and the silver spheres. On the whole, it is easier and more intellectually satisfying to accept God from the Athanasian Creed than to receive Him from the hands of Professor Cassius J. Keyser, Ph.D.

EUCLID'S AXIOMS

Dr Paul Carus, in his essay on *The Foundations of Mathematics*, an important essay which English readers owe to the enterprise of a publishing house in Chicago, has a passage which is refreshing in an age when elementary school children are taught to raise their

juvenile hoofs against Euclid. Dr Carus writes: "Euclid's Elements of Geometry is not counted among the books of divine revelation, but truly it deserves to be held in religious veneration. There is a real sanctity in mathematical truth, which is not sufficiently appreciated, and certainly if truth, helpfulness, and directness and simplicity of presentation give a title to rank as divinely inspired literature, Euclid's great work should be counted among the canonical books of mankind." And W. K. Clifford wrote: "The book has been for nearly twenty-two centuries the encouragement and guide of that scientific thought which is one thing with the progress of man from a worse to a better state." It is hardly too much to say that there is not a bridge, or a railway, or a steamship in the world which does not ultimately depend for its existence upon one or other of the truths that Euclid expounded. Yet this almost divinely inspired writer has become during the last century a *corpus vile* for infuriated philosophers to dissect. The difficulty about Euclid is mainly a metaphysical and not a mathematical difficulty. The idealists and the empiricists fought for his body, as the Greeks and Trojans fought for the body of Patroclus. The chieftains of the empiricists were Locke, Hume, and John Stuart Mill; while the case for the transcendentalists was finally stated as follows by Kant: "If geometry has apodeictic certainty, its matter—*i.e.* space—must be *a priori*, and, as such, must be purely subjective; and conversely, if space is purely subjective, geometry must have apodeictic certainty." This does not greatly help the man in the street, whose

case becomes still more pitiful when he learns from Mr Bertrand Russell that the philosophers employ the terms "*a priori*," "subjective," and "empirical" with "extremely variable use." Kant's dilemma is a sufficiently hard nut to crack if he used his terms with exact definition, but if he did not, then the ordinary reader may be forgiven if he confesses that "he don't know where he are," and for regarding the admixture of mathematics and metaphysics as a silly conglomeration. Any person who wishes to gain some knowledge of the philosophical points in dispute would do well to read chapters v., vi., and vii. of the second book of Mill's *Logic*.

For the benefit of the parent who, in odd moments saved from excogitating the problem of the exact nature of the dogmatic instruction he requires for his child, may wonder why Euclid has been excluded from modern elementary schools, I will endeavour to give some account of the controversy which has raged round the great Alexandrian geometer. Before any of the propositions of Euclid can be demonstrated, certain definitions, postulates, and axioms, or, as Euclid called them, "common notions," must be accepted as self-evident. The philosophers wrangle as to whether the axioms are "necessary truths," a part of man's mental constitution, or whether they are inferences from experience. Let us leave them wrangling, because from our standpoint the matter in dispute is not of much importance, and the rival parties, according to Mr Bertrand Russell, have performed the feat of the Kilkenny cats. That

learned mathematician writes : “ For the Kantian view it was necessary to maintain that all axioms are self-evident—a view which honest people found it hard to extend to the axiom of parallels. Hence arose a search for more plausible axioms which might be declared *a priori* truths. But though many such axioms were suggested, all could be sanely doubted, and the search only led to scepticism.” (In passing, I most respectfully suggest that the alternative axiom advocated by Playfair and De Morgan, that two intersecting straight lines cannot both be parallel to a third straight line, cannot “be sanely doubted.”) Mr Russell proceeds : “ The second alternative—the view that no other axioms would give results consistent with experience—could only be tested by a greater mathematical ability than falls to the lot of most philosophers. Accordingly the test was wanting until Lobatchewsky and Bolyai developed their non-Euclidean system. It was then proved, with all the cogency of mathematical demonstration, that premises other than Euclid’s could give results empirically indistinguishable within the limits of observation from those of the orthodox system. Hence the empirical argument for Euclid was also destroyed.” Poor Euclid ! the basis of his system is knocked into a cocked hat ; only his conclusions remain absolutely and universally true within the limits of human experience.

Now, let us descend from these lofty heights of metaphysics. Euclid as ordinarily translated has twelve axioms, and in practice teachers find that an in-

telligent boy will accept eleven of them as self-evident, but for the twelfth, the axiom of parallels, which runs : "If a straight line meet two straight lines so as to make the two interior angles on the same side of it taken together less than two right angles, these straight lines being continually produced shall at length meet on that side on which the angles are which are less than two right angles," he requires proof, and Euclidean proof of it has never yet been devised by mortal man, and, according to Dr Carus, never will be devised. "An unsophisticated man," says Dr Carus, "when he speaks of a straight line means that straightness is implied thereby, and if he be told that space may be such as to render all straight lines crooked, he will naturally be bewildered." I should think he would, because when an unsophisticated man speaks of space he means absolute emptiness of things, vacuity, and how mere emptiness can affect the straightness of a line or anything else he may be forgiven for not knowing. When metageometricians talk to us about the curvature of space, they are guilty of an absurd confusion of terms. We do not challenge their methods, or their strictly mathematical conclusions, any more than we should challenge the results of Hamilton's multiplication of vectors, a process which corresponds with nothing in real experience. It is the beauty of mathematics that if its postulates are self-consistent, even if they are not objectively true, its conclusions will be sound. But mathematics is a process of measurement, and by it you can no more determine the pro-

perties of space, if by any stretch of terms emptiness can be said to have properties, than you can tell a man's capacity for learning languages by taking his chest measurement ; or, as Mr Russell says, "it throws no more light upon the nature of our space than arithmetic throws upon the population of Great Britain." Dr Carus continues : "If his (the unsophisticated man's) metageometrical friend, with much learnedness and in sober earnest, tells him that when he sends out a ray as a straight line in a forward direction it will imperceptibly deviate and finally turn back upon his occiput, he will naturally become suspicious of the mental soundness of his company." Well, what the metageometrician says may or may not be true ; in any case, it has no mathematical significance. If it is true, it simply means that owing to resistance of the ether, or from some other cause of which we are quite ignorant, light, instead of travelling in a straight line, travels in a curve. It certainly does not mean that two straight lines can ever enclose a space, or that the sum of the three angles of a plane triangle can ever differ by the most infinitesimal fraction from the sum of two right angles. "We might as well say," says Dr Carus, "that the norms of logic are refuted when we make faulty observations, or whenever we are confronted by contradictory statements. No one feels called upon on account of the many lies that are told to propose a theory of the probable curvature of logic. Yet, seriously speaking, in the province of pure being the theory of a curved logic has the same right to a respectful hearing as the curvature of space."

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What happens to an ordinary boy is this : Euclid is put into his hands, and he is told to learn the axioms. For educational purposes it does not matter one straw whether the axioms are true or false ; for him, parallel straight lines when produced to infinity never meet ; straight lines which do meet are not parallel. He knows nothing, and probably never will know anything, about spherical or hyperbolic space ; but, like a good lad, he commits his axioms to memory, and then, along with Euclid, proceeds to reason from them regardless of their truth or falsity. For educational purposes we need neither attempt to make certain of the truth of the premises on their own account, along with Kant and the idealists, nor try to show that no other set of premises will give results consistent with experience, along with Mill and the empiricists.

The object of geometrical education is not the discovery of geometrical truth—that may be left to the engineer—but the deduction of just inferences from given premises, whether those premises be absolutely true or false. And modern objections to certain of Euclid's methods will never occur to an ordinary beginner. I do not agree, for instance, with Mr Bertrand Russell that the method of superposition employed in the fourth proposition of Book I. "has no logical validity, and strikes every intelligent child as a juggle." In the first place, says Mr Russell, "to speak of motion implies that our triangles are not spatial, but material." Further, if the side of the triangle to be

superposed were a column of mercury in a glass tube, and the extremity of the side on which it was to be placed were a fire, the triangles would not be equal in all respects. If Mr Russell is told that both triangles are rigid bodies, he retorts that there are no rigid bodies in the universe, and that "the meaning of rigidity presupposes a purely spatial metrical equality logically independent of matter." These indeed be pretty considerations for the kindergarten. But every intelligent child knows that as a process of imagination he can pick up any triangle, regardless of its constitution, and can lay it upon any other triangle, and then, if two sides of each and the included angles are equal to one another, each to each, he perceives intuitively that the two triangles are equal in every respect.

It is true that Euclid gives no evidence that the two circles of his first proposition intersect, and that if they do not the whole proposition fails. But we know as surely as we know anything that they always have intersected and always will intersect, and until as mathematicians of some little knowledge we come to read the speculations of non-Euclideans the need of proving that they intersect never occurs to us; and supposing that for mathematicians such a need does exist, the educational utility of Euclid's *Elements* for boys and girls is not lessened. There is too much philosophy and too little hard work about modern education, and the boy who has got by heart the first four and the sixth books, and has mastered the order

and nature of their demonstrations, is likely to be a better thinker and probably a better mathematician than the superior young person who at the age of fourteen sets himself to investigate the validity of the twelfth axiom.

THE END OF THE WORLD

The belief that the world will come to an end is firmly fixed in the minds of men. It is taught by the religions of almost all races, savage and civilised ; and it was fully adopted by the physical science of the nineteenth century, that wonderful intellectual movement which by some of its devotees was offered to mankind as a sufficient substitute for religion. According to religious traditions, fire is the agency which will destroy the earth. The prophet Joel described the fire and the pillars of smoke in the great and the terrible day of the Lord. St Peter predicted a day in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Students of eschatology tell us of similar doctrines held all the world over. The physicists were equally insistent upon the mortality of the earth, the solar system, and the stellar universe. Worlds and suns, they told us, must, like living creatures, begin, wax, wane, and die. The idea of a cataclysm, the consequence of divine intervention, they repudiated, and, as it was difficult by evolutionary processes to

conduct the sun and his offspring to a general bonfire, they repudiated the doctrine of destruction by heat and suggested the theory of destruction by cold. The sun, we were told, is like a glowing furnace of coke, and there is no stoker to add more fuel ; consequently, it is dissipating its stored-up energy without absorbing any fresh energy, and must in time "go out" like a kitchen fire when the maids have gone to bed. So sure of this were the men of science that they began to figure up how long it would be before the sun went out. The geologists, astronomers, and physicists differed among themselves by many millions of years as to the length of the period, but they were and are at one in insisting that there must be a period to the energy of the sun. There was some likelihood that they would come to an agreement as to a maximum and minimum of possibility for this period when the discovery was made of radio-active matter with unsuspected stores of intra-atomic energy, and the death of the sun was indefinitely postponed. But only postponed ; for even if it should turn out that there are intra-ionic forces exceeding in intensity the atomic forces by as much as the atomic forces exceed the molecular, science will still demand the death of the universe as inexorably as nature demands the death of every living thing. It may be in a few millions of millions of years, it may be in billions of billions, but, sooner or later, we are taught, all the substance of the universe will lie heaped together in the vast inane, bound motionless by unimagined cold, lost in depths of

unimagined darkness, while its multitudinous energies, finally dissipated, ripple away for evermore through the ageless and infinite ether.


It is a cheerless dream, perhaps a baseless dream, the result of man's lack of imagination and his careless anthropomorphism. We measure everything by the human foot because we have no other standard with which to work, and it may be that our measurements are all wrong. Of the nature and cause of the forces at work in the universe we know nothing at all; even those which observation reveals to us are impenetrable mysteries, and there may be thousands of others the operations of which we cannot perceive and the existence of which we do not suspect. We only know what we can measure; all the rest is conjecture; but only a fool will assume that what we can measure is everything. The minutest ion may be a world big enough to support countless myriads of living creatures, and the time of its flight through a Crookes's tube may be long enough for the evolution of intelligent races, for the development of a glorious history, for the achievement of great victories over mind and matter. Why should we assume that our foot-rule is the final test of reality? On the other hand, all the suns and satellites of our universe may be but ions of a single atom of some stupendous cosmos. Of the meaning and the purpose of the things we can measure we are almost entirely ignorant, and to speculate as to their ultimate form and destiny is futile and foolish. The end of the world as a religious conception and the end

of the world as a scientific conjecture are different things. The dream of science has no immediate interest for men. It matters nothing to us that in an undeterminable number of millions of years the sun will have cooled down so much that only polar bears and walruses will be able to live on the earth ; but it matters a good deal if in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we may be changed, and the earth and the works that are therein may be burnt up.

What has the science of to-day to say as to the possibility of such a catastrophe? Astronomers suspect the existence in space of dark bodies—that is, of suns which have cooled down, give out no light of their own, and, therefore, cannot be seen by man. There is no direct evidence that such bodies exist, but if they do exist, certain phenomena may be accounted for which otherwise are at present inexplicable. Now, the sun, carrying with him his family of planets, is believed to be moving through space in the direction of the star Vega at the rate of eleven miles a second. To reach the nearest fixed star that we can see would take him 80,000 years, so that the present generation has no interest in the possibility of a collision with any known heavenly body. But suppose there is one of these worn-out suns, a dark, invisible body lying in space in our sun's path a great deal nearer to us ! Mr Ellard Gore has calculated that a dark globe of the sun's mass and the earth's density, shining with the reflected light of the sun, would become visible to the most powerful telescopes at a distance of 15,000 millions of miles from

the earth. In a little less than ten years' time from its first appearance its distance would be reduced to 6000 millions of miles, and it would then be visible to the naked eye. Three years later it would be about as far as Jupiter from the sun, and would then be the brightest object in the night sky except the moon. Then the crash would happen in about fifty-eight days, and the subsequent proceedings would interest mankind no more. The solar system would become a shimmering cloud of incandescent gas, and a few years later, when the light of the conflagration reached the nearest star, the astronomers on its satellites would begin to speculate about the birth of a new nebula and the disappearance of an old sun. Thus, if the dark body were discovered at its earliest telescopic appearance, mankind would have a little more than thirteen years in which to put their affairs in order. Lest thoughtless persons should be tempted by this length of warning to procrastinate, one may mention that if the size of the dark body were only that of Jupiter the period of notice would shrink to three years, and would only be a few months if the stranger were as big as the earth. A globe of the earth's mass tumbling into the sun would be quite large enough to solve all terrestrial problems. It is comforting to learn that Mr Gore has examined the region round Vega with a "binocular field-glass," and has found "no star which is not perfectly well known to astronomers." But one would be better pleased if he had made his survey with a more powerful instrument.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND



She was a little English terrier, very old and very gentle. When she came, we thought her middle-aged, for her ways were sedate and she had none of the boisterous frivolity of youth. For twelve years she was a gentle personality in the house, loving and tender to all living things except strange cats, a flaw which served to remind us that she, too, partook of the failings of our common mortal nature. Otherwise she was a pattern to us ; grateful for the least word or act of kindness, full of a sense of duty and ever acting under its influence, pathetically unselfish, and eager to make return in a hundred pleasant and thoughtful ways for the friendship she enjoyed.

Her happiness and contentment were contagious, and when inevitable little troubles and worries entered the house she had the art of driving them away with the gentle glances of her blue-black eyes and the droll twinkle of her stumpy tail. Up to the last her spirit never failed her, and she faced the approaches of age and weakness with cheerful courage. It was a grief to her when she could no longer climb the stairs in the morning and call us up with a sharp, imperious bark ; but she did not repine, and seemed to find compensation in the doubled warmth of her greeting when we visited her. Her weakness grew, her failing heart fluttered feebly, and she could no longer leave her box-bed by the fire-side, and her kindly doctor told us that her case was beyond his art. For a week she lay there, and though

she must have suffered from much weariness she hid it from us and always answered brightly when we spoke to her, pretending that nothing was the matter. Then at last we came and found her with her head nestling on her paw sound asleep, as she had been a thousand times before ; only this time we knew not how to wake her.

Can it be that this little organised unit of love and duty and goodness is utterly destroyed, is dissipated for ever in the infinite inane ? I cannot believe that it is ; it must in some form persist

“Somewhere, surely, afar
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being.”

Why should one believe otherwise ? For death, as we know it, is to us phenomenal ; all the knowledge we have of it comes through our human senses and faculties. We know that what we can see and hear is only a tiny part of the moving pageantry of Nature. There are sounds too majestically deep, and others too divinely shrill, for the ears of man to hear, but the sounds exist ; there are rays of light that speed alike from the vastest sun and the smallest candle that no human eye can perceive, but the light is there, and would be visible to us if our faculties were enlarged. Now, since we know beyond all doubt that there are regions of the cosmos inconceivably great and unimaginably small, which lie utterly beyond the reach of our powers of perception, that what we can see and know of the totality of things is

something like a point of light passing across a vast picture in a darkened chamber, may we not with some confidence assume that, when the activities of mind and character of those we love appear to us to stop, all that has happened is that they have passed outside our mental and moral spectrum?

As I stood under the dripping trees one winter morning, and committed to the earth the body of my dear little friend, such thoughts came to me, and I have written them in the hope that some who sorrow with a keener grief for a more bitter loss perchance may find comfort in them.

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